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ABSTRACT

Developed to shed light on theater librarianship in Great Britain, this study defines theater libraries, illustrates the kind of work carried out in theater libraries and collections, reviews functional problem areas, and advocates better organization, financing, and staffing for these unique institutions. The study covers public, academic, private, and institutional collections to produce a critical account of the current state of theater librarianship. Appendices provide staff structures of operating libraries, classification schemes in use, examples of university courses in theater librarianship, and a range of services available from the libraries and their collections. A bibliography of 70 titles is included. (RAA)

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UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS SERIES NUMBER TEN

Theatre Librarianship

by A. M. Johnston

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FOREWORD

A dissertation, similar in character to this paper, is produced in the Sheffield Postgraduate School of Librarianship and Information Science as part of each student's work towards a Master's degree; it is normally regarded as an academic exercise and allowed to remain unpublished. It is felt however that some of these studies make a real contribution to knowledge and may be of considerable topical value. It has therefore been decided to publish those of particular merit, such as this one, in the School's series of Occasional Papers.

M. F. Lynch

ERRATA

A. M. Johnston Theatre Librarianship

p. 14 line 16 should read
"a bibliographical course, one for the Bachelor of Librarianship".

p. 53 line 17/18 should read
"The L.A. she felt, was not the proper body to do the work of a T.L.A."

p. 68 i) should read "Bachelor of Librarianship"

p. 71 Appendix III Heading should read
"Classification schemes in use"

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Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr. R. Usherwood for all his help and encouragement.

LIBRARIES AND COLLECTIONS VISITED DURING THE INVESTIGATION

1. The Theatre Collection, Drama Department, The University, 29, Park Row, Bristol, BS1 5LT.
2. Radio Drama Play Library, BBC, Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA.
3. Drama Section, Central Reference Library, BBC, The Langham, London W1A 1AA.
4. Drama Library, British Council, 65, Davies Street, London W1Y 2AA.
5. British Theatre Association Library, 9, Fitzroy Square, London W1P 6AE.
6. British Theatre Museum Association Library, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU.
7. Westminster Central Reference Library, St. Martin's Street, London WC2H 7HP.
8. Central School of Speech and Drama Library, Embassy Theatre Eton Avenue, London NW3 3HY.
9. Greenwood Library, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, 62-64 Gower Street, London WC1E 6ED.
10. Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, Library Headquarters, Balne Lane, Wakefield WF2 0DQ.

MUSEUMS VISITED DURING THE INVESTIGATION

1. Theatre Museum, Room 132, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL.
2. British Theatre Museum, Leighton House, 12, Holland Park Road, London W14 8LZ (now part of the Theatre Museum).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALA	American Library Association
ARLIS	Art Libraries Society
BC	British Council
BL	British Library
BLRDD	British Library Research and Development Department
BNB	British National Bibliography
BTA	British Theatre Association
BTI	British Theatre Institute
BTMA	British Theatre Museum Association
CSSD	Central School of Speech and Drama
DC	Decimal Classification (Dewey)
DES	Department of Education and Science
DoE	Department of the Environment
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
LA	Library Association
RADA	Royal Academy of Dramatic Art
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SIBMAS	Section Internationale des Bibliothèques et Musées des Arts du Spectacle
STR	Society of Theatre Research
TLA	Theatre Library Association
TLS	Times Literary Supplement
TM	Theatre Museum
TQ	Theatre Quarterly
V and A	Victoria and Albert Museum

INTRODUCTION

Theatre Librarianship is a topic about which the majority of librarians know very little and why indeed should they? It is an extremely specialised field, having the same narrow subject boundaries which are delimited in law, music and medical librarianship. However, it is generally recognised that these latter groups deal with distinctive subject areas often requiring specialist experience and training. This is illustrated to some extent by the variety of groups which has sprung up to represent the interests of librarians in these fields, some of which are sections of the Library Association and others are quite separate. For example, we have the Medical, Health and Welfare Libraries Group. The LA's Annual Report for 1977 [1] mentions the formation of the Local Studies Group and approval was given for the formation of a Government Libraries Group. The International Association of Music Libraries has an official representative in the United Kingdom. There is the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians, the Art Libraries Society better known as ARLIS and many others. Some of the LA's recent publications also reflect special needs, such as The Mental Hospital Library, and Musicians and Libraries in the U.K. [2] Recently, there emerged the valuable publication: Directory of Theatre Research Resources [3] produced by Diana Howard, librarian at Richmond Reference Library. However, this was published not by the LA but by the British Theatre Institute, a body which seems to have recognised quite some time ago that the organisation of information with regard to the subject of theatre is not as it should be. If the Library Association appears to be unconcerned in this field, the BTI certainly is not. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to point to the lack of publicity and interest shown by the profession as a whole, to illustrate what kind of work is carried out in theatre libraries and collections, to explain why, in many cases, they are hampered in their normal functioning, and to press for a better organisation, financing and staffing of these often quite unique and valuable institutions.

I have attempted to cover all types of theatre collection, including public, academic, private and institutional. I am aware of the vast and diverse quantity of material scattered in many public libraries (some of which have already been listed by Diana

Howard) but my concern is more with those few libraries specially created to serve the subject of theatre and drama. As it would have been impossible to be exhaustive in the short time available for the research, I have had to be selective in my choice. Having never actually worked in this specialised field, I hope I will not be accused of having too high expectations, desite the fact that I have endeavoured to illustrate the difficulties in this area of librarianship. My main concern has been to attempt what I believe has not been done in this country - to produce a critical account of theatre librarianship in its present varied and, in some cases, pitiful state. I have drawn some necessary comparisons with the United States which, unfortunately to our shame, is well advanced in the field of theatre librarianship. Surely the birthplace of Shakespeare and some of the greatest dramatists in the world could summon the financial resources, skill and ingenuity to improve the standard of information services in the theatre? Very slowly, groups of people <u>are</u> becoming aware of the need to preserve theatrical material and build up research resources, of the importance of efficient dissemination of information about these resources as more and more people begin to study theatre and drama for its own sake. My intention is simply to speed up that slow and painful process.

1. WHAT IS A THEATRE LIBRARY?

While carrying out my research, I noticed in discussion with other librarians and student librarians not involved in theatre librarianship, that many asked me "What exactly is a theatre library?" reflecting the lack of publicity many of these libraries and collections have received over the years.

Let me therefore answer that question by outlining the types of library that exist and what each library ought to achieve within its own particular scope.

The study of the subject of theatre may involve the following aspects: the art of acting, including practical and theatrical considerations, the history of acting, development and trends in particular styles of acting, the history of theatre buildings and study of architectural styles in the theatre, the development of the stage and trends in stage design, the study of costume, design, make-up, lighting, stage scenery and all technical aspects of play production, theatre management and administration, and the study of individual producers or directors and their methods of direction. It may also involve the study of subjects which fall into the broader category of the performing arts, but are always closely connected with the threatre. These are united by the fact that they all involve a kind of "spectacle", including ballet, opera (theatre collections tend to be concerned mainly with the pictorial aspects here), mime, circus, vaudeville, magic and carnival. In this century, it is impossible to ignore "fringe" subjects which may have influenced the theatre and acting, such as cinema, radio and television especially where they are directly concerned with drama and the theatre. Theatre differs from these "mechanical" arts in that it is primarily concerned with the live performance and a reacting audience. The spoken word and the written text are especially important, though these are often varied by the introduction of acting, dancing, singing or other forms of spectacle. The manner in which a play is performed, interpreted and technically produced is also of the utmost importance.

1.1 Types of theatre library

Theatre libraries exist for a varied body of users, depending on the library's purpose. They may be private collections and not libraries (such as the Mander and Mitchenson Collection), tending to be primarily archival in purpose and open only to serious

researchers by private arrangement. Incidentally, the term "collection" as opposed to "library" implies not only books but also items generally accepted as museum materials. There are libraries belonging to societies and associations which exist largely through subscription, geared to the needs of their members who have a serious and sometimes professional interest in the theatre. The British Theatre Association library is one example. There are also academic libraries, or libraries which exist as part of a drama school or department, serving students and staff and usually responsible to the teaching staff for supplying appropriate course material. Finally, there are collections which form part of a public library system, in which case they could be serving all of the above mentioned categories of users.

1.2. What should a theatre library by supplying?

1.21 Stock

Naturally, each library will differ in its purpose according to whom it serves, though it is possible to give some general guidelines about what should be provided, by all libraries, in the way of information materials and services. Obviously, its stock should cover those subjects of study which I outlined earlier in the chapter. In addition, information might be provided about drama in education for the use of teachers; career information including prospectuses of drama schools and university drama courses; practical advice on play production including the legalities involved, especially when providing a service to amateur drama groups; information about businesses dealing with costumes, design, lighting and publicity, and charities, foundations or trusts available for sponsoring and supporting arts activities. The problem always arises of where to draw the boundaries round the stock. How far should one range beyond the subject of theatre? Is it possible or even desirable to draw strict dividing lines between disciplines? Most libraries will include small sections on music, usually connected with a particular production, and ballet and opera, especially where the costume, lighting and stage design is of particular relevance to people working in the theatre.

Film and television cannot be ignored by a decision to include these will depend very much on whom the library serves. Design of sets, lighting, make-up, and scriptwriting in the field of film and television have, no doubt, influenced the theatre to some extent. Certainly, a style of acting or method of direction

may have become famous through the medium of television or film, and been passed over into the theatre world. Inclusion of other "fringe" arts depends on to what extent they are of use to the student of theatre. Most libraries in this field in the U.K. limit themselves to theatre as a major core subject, unlike the situation in the United States where a large number of collections are known as "performing arts libraries".

Another problem connected with stock and facing all specialist libraries in all fields, is whether one should also provide a general reference collection. It is probably impossible for a theatre library to be self-sufficient, simply because any person involved in the theatre, either as a professional or an amateur, must necessarily acquaint himself with other subjects. A stage set designer may need to know about the interior design of a particular period; a stage manager must ensure that his furniture, light fittings and furnishings are appropriate to the period of the play in question; a dramatist may need to check a statement for political or historical accuracy. The drama college libraries which I visited did carry material on interior design, social history, art and other subjects which would help the student gain a clearer view of his subject and to encourage him to read beyond the subject. However, it is important that the library maintains good relations with the nearest public library so that enquirers can be forwarded there if necessary.

1.22 Non-Book Material

Essential to theatre research is the accessibility to original documentation. If possible, a theatre library should have a deliberate policy to collect theatrical ephemera within its locality. This may include: playbills, scripts, prompt books, correspondence, diaries, ledgers, account books of theatre companies, autographs, obituaries, plans for designs of theatres and stagesets and other blueprints, newspaper cuttings, pamphlets and leaflets relating to local arts groups.

Audio-visual material is also a great asset, including records and tapes of performances or readings, slides of stage sets, theatres and actors, and occasionally models of theatres and sets, sometimes illustrating mechanical contrivances such as trapdoors, lighting effects and even scene changes. Some libraries have small collections of props, costume, stage jewellery and puppets though this type of material is probably best handled by a museum.

1.23 Other Services

Photographic and photocopying facilities are very important. It is extremely useful if the library can publish its catalogues though this can be an expensive business. Lectures and exhibitions should also ideally be part of the library's role, but space is the over-riding problem here, and theatre libraries, it will be seen, are not the richest of institutions.

I have outlined what I consider to be the ideal for a theatre library, and few can hope to achieve it. However, as interest in the theatre increases steadily over the years and more and more students embark on academic and practical drama courses, it is essential that libraries keep in step with this progression and improve vastly their present services.

Rosamond Gilder [4] pointed out this remarkable development, notably in the States, of drama and theatre curricula in institutes of higher education. Similarly, this is now happening in Great Britain, though we are not getting the libraries to support this upsurge in interest. Gilder notes how once the theatre was a "step-child" of the arts and few efforts were made to collect and preserve material documenting the theatre. Actors, playwrights, singers and dancers were considered to be mountebanks, "living outside the law, branded with 'infamia' in Rome, vagabonds and outcasts, unworthy of Christian burial in France and England". The theatre was viewed by the Puritans in Colonial America as "the anteroom of hell". Now it has been recognised all over the world as a subject worthy to be studied at universities and specialist institutions.

In 1958, Gilder outlined the biggest problem facing theatre libraries:

"Every important producing centre in the world has its theatre collections . . . but they are scattered in a dozen different places, some inaccessible to the general public, such as the collections in the great National Theatres, some embedded in the vast structure of National Libraries or National archives, where only the trained researcher can hope to find them. Again, a theatre will perhaps own precious items of its historic past but lack of funds, space, or sometimes lack of interest, will allow these treasures to be lost or dissipated" [4].

Almost exactly twenty years later, all that Gilder wrote in that passage is still true in this country, and we have apparently made little or no progress. It is a not dissimilar situation abroad,

but we lag far behind other countries in our awareness of the importance of collecting, arranging and preserving theatre material, and in the efficient dissemination of information. The following chapters attempt to illustrate why this is so.

2. USERS

Before one can provide an efficient library service, the groups making use of the service have to be defined as clearly as possible. Sometimes, especially in the public sector, these may be very fluid. It is possible, however, to cite four major possible user groups:

1) Those who are practically involved in the theatre, such as designers, producers, technicians, press agents, actors and those training to be actors.
2) Researchers into theatre history, techniques of acting and all aspects of play production, writers, dramatic critics, and historians.
3) Those involved in film or television, needing to check details of their work.
4) Members of the theatre-going community, following their personal interests in the theatre, including also amateur drama groups. This last group forms possibly the largest body of users.

2.1. Use made by professionals

The extent of use made by actors of these specialist collections is most difficult to gauge. Obviously, many actors do not work within reach of such collections, since the latter tend to be concentrated in London. However, the impression received from many of the collections I visited was that actors were less frequent visitors than other groups, though they did make considerable use of the British Theatre Association library. In discussion with the Press and Public Relations Officer at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, I asked whether, in her experience, actors used libraries to research into the historical or social background of a play or to gain a clearer interpretation of the play. The obvious answer came that it was impossible to generalise and depended very much on the play being produced. An actress at the Crucible revealed that she made heavy use of the Central Library, close to the theatre, especially with plays which entailed considerable literary research such as Shakespeare or Shaw. Whether or not this actually added to the strength of her own performance she was unable to say. Those who did little or no reading in preparation for a play performed as well as or better than herself. Indeed, there seems to be division of opinion on whether actors should research into a play to assist their creation of a character. Michael Billington [5] makes an interesting comment on RADA students' performances. In challenging the ability of RADA's students to use their library to help their

acting, he writes:

"One has to admit that RADA students often look better equipped than their contemporaries but, simply because there is no definable theory underpinning their work, one often gets the impression that their technique is stronger than their grasp of character. I would instance a production of Richard the Third I saw put on with third year students in the late autumn of 1969. The Richard . . . had an admirable manual expressiveness, physical agility and vocal control that augured well for his future. There was not, however, much indication that he had penetrated deeply behind the lines or worked out the relationship between the character's physical deformity and daemonic instincts".

In following up this statement, the RADA librarian in communication with myself, commented on the heavy use of the library made by American students attending the school compared with the minimal use made by English students. Many of the former had university degrees in drama or the theatre and were therefore more used to the academic approach. He is now following a definite policy to publicise the library more and encourage its use.

On the other hand, the library of the Central School of Speech and Drama was quite heavily used and no doubt its magnificent stock has something to do with this. Students were given projects which required each student to study a particular play and to carry out research into its social and historical background. One of the students I talked to said they were encouraged by their lecturers to use the library and to "read around" the play upon which they were working, especially other plays by the same playwright in order to build up a basic knowledge of his work, style and thought.

How important is it therefore that those professionally involved in the theatre should make use of a library's resources? The study of past performances of a particular play is surely necessary to those engaged in a new production, especially the producer. Books and theatrical records can assist in the vital checking on what has gone before, the problems that were faced, how they were solved, the interpretations adopted by actor, producer and designer, and the reception by audience and critic.

"The living theatre is recreated by stimulating contact with that which has gone before, coloured, enriched, made vital by the genius of the artist expressing his own day and hour".

Thus wrote Rosamond Gilder, [6] though her view of the professionals

and libraries is expressive of the flourishing state of theatre librarianship in the States:

"Actor, designer, producer, critic, press agent, when once they discover that there is a knowledgeable friend within the gates, storm the portals of library and museum and carry away treasures of information and inspiration for the problems of production in which they are engaged". [7]

A sight for sore eyes indeed! No doubt, the same would happen in this country if we could provide more libraries and efficient services to match. It may be, though, that producers carry out less research than their contemporaries abroad. An article in The Guardian [8] by Billington reports an interview with Peter Stein, the German director, and comments upon the amount of work that goes into his productions:

" . . . one is struck not merely by the gulf between English and German theatre, but also by the vast difference in practice. Every production for the Schaubuhne is a massive research project. In preparation for the first venture into Shakespeare, Stein and members of the company visited Stratford and the Shakespeare country . . . Then they staged in Berlin a kaleidoscopic anthology about Tudor England . . . "

Libraries and research go hand in hand. Without libraries, research suffers. It is my belief that theatre libraries have barely made an impression on the theatre world, although they have the potential to do so.

3. STAFF: SINE QUA NON

It is obvious that most theatre libraries exist on a shoe-string, and as a result staffing is skeletal. Many of the assistants are unpaid, motivated by their love of the theatre and rewarded by little else. There seems little chance of the situation improving since funds are not forthcoming and will not be, possibly for an indefinite period of time. The services survive on enthusiasm, dedication and hard work, drawing on the vast knowledge and sometimes practical experience of the staff.

3.1. Understaffing and its results

Appendix III offers comparisons between libraries in terms of staffing, qualifications and pay. As can be seen, the picture is by no means uniform, but too many important collections and libraries have part-time and voluntary help. Museums are in a equally unenviable position. At the British Theatre Museum now amalgamated with the Theatre Museum, the administrator was part-time and paid and her assistant part-time and voluntary. Staff from the Victoria and Albert Museum dealt with the museum material while she dealt mainly with the accounts and committee work of the BTMA. The library which belonged to the BTM and is now part of the Theatre Museum housed separately at the Senate House Library, University of London, is run by one devoted librarian who comes in three times per week, getting her bus fares only paid. During that period she attempts to keep up with her cataloguing and classification but much of the valuable collection of ephemera lies unindexed. Time permits only the minimum of work to be carried out. In the librarian's absence enquirers are allowed up to the library by the staff of the main library but obviously this is by no means ideal and much of the valuable material cannot be examined as it is necessarily locked away while the library is unmanned. Hopefully, the library will move to Covent Garden in the 1980's, with the Theatre Museum, though this is by no means definite. The British Theatre Association library is another example of a library which struggles for survival with one full-time librarian and three part-time, poorly paid assistants. As a result of this deplorable understaffing, the BTA library provides what I consider to be a restricted service, albeit an efficient and speedy one. Diana Howard [9] notes that the catalogue is "for staff use only" and "members are advised to have material got out for them, in advance of their visit to the library". When I asked the librarian

the reason for this restriction, I received this reply:
"With regard to staff only using the card catalogue, the information included on these cards is not solely book reference and years of experience have taught us that members are more of a hindrance than help if they endeavour to assist themselves . . . I would mention that we are often told by students how much they appreciate our service and the time which is saved when information required is made available by us - not found in other libraries, I am often told!"
Granted the truth of the last sentence, surely if the catalogue were arranged so that members could understand it and were permitted to obtain books from the shelves, this would cut the work of the staff by half though the extra cataloguing required would certainly demand time.
One of the foremost drama schools in the country, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, possesses a library which is professionally manned termtime and vacations, all day Friday, and on Thursday afternoons operated by a library school student, paid £4 a session. The rest of the week, it is opened by volunteer drama students from 5.30 to 7.00. They are responsible, while on duty, for preventing theft of books, for issuing books and occasionally carry out stocktaking, for which duties they are paid £1 per hour. Consequently, there is little time for classifying the stock and only the simplest form of cataloguing is carried out. Ironically, there is a Library Committee consisting of about 20 staff and students, yet the library is unable to function properly through lack of funds and staff. As the library expands, which, surprisingly, it <u>is</u> doing, its problems can only increase without a permanent librarian. In many libraries, enthusiasm and practical experience in the theatre seemed to make up for lack of qualifications in the staff. Neither the keeper of the Bristol Theatre Collection nor her assistant were qualified but both had worked in the theatre at some time and this meant that they were alert to the information needs of those involved in theatre.
Few libraries can say they have sufficient staff but equally few are forced to survive with the minimal staffing possessed by some theatre libraries. I was told at the Theatre Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum) that even if they had fifty or a hundred staff there would still be more than enough to do! No theatre library's demands for staff are unreasonable. All they require is permanent,

paid, full-time librarians and half their problems would be solved.

3.2 Training of staff: views of those in the field

One of the questions I posed to many of the librarians working in theatre collections was whether ot not they considered it important or useful to have some kind of specialist training for theatre librarianship. All questioned believed in the need for a background knowledge in and enthusiasm for the theatre, and most considered the ideal to be a combination of the latter with professional qualifications. Two definitely felt there was nothing particularly specialised about theatre and drama library work, and that a course in theatre librarianship would be superfluous. One museum assistant believed that the job could only be picked up through practical experience, and put forward ideas that made me considerably change my views which had previously been favourable towards training for theatre librarians. He believed that, on the whole, specialist training would not necessarily help the new entrant, when faced with the kind of problem which a theatre collection would throw up, especially in museum work. What was needed ideally, were qualifications which combined a higher degree, say in theatre history (entailing preferably a broad study of the subject of theatre) with training museum or library work.

Others felt that unqualified staff in charge of collections were at a disadvantage because their lack of training meant they were unable to converse for example on problems of cataloguing and classification, on the same detailed level with other qualified librarians. Professional status and expertise were naturally considered important by those who themselves were qualified. One librarian believed, rightly I think, that theatre libraries were a very "low-powered part of the whole library system". He also felt that specialist training might over-educate the librarian. He had had no specialist training himself, though he had a degree in English and librarianship and an interest in the theatre before taking up his post as Drama librarian. The librarian at the British Theatre Association quite dogmatically stated: "The work here requires more knowledge of plays and theatre than library qualifications."

It became clear that the general view was that the idea of training for theatre librarianship was very admirable in theory but the practical result would mean that librarians would be trained in a field which had no career prospects. The majority of those trained

would have to enter an entirely different area of librarianship. Unlike in America, the number of special theatre and drama libraries in this country could probably be counted on two hands. The situation would be the same in the museum world. At the Theatre Museum, museum assistants trained in theatre work have poor career prospects and inevitably move on to an unrelated field.

It is possible, if ever money flows freely again, that in the future theatre library training will be a feasible proposition, as interest continues to grow in the theatre and more libraries develop. At the moment, that is merely a pipedream. There is an indication, however, that interest is very slowly awakening. A course connected with theatre is in existence at the College of Librarianship Wales, Aberystwyth, and has been since Autumn 1975. It was compiled by Raymond Lonsdale who, very usefully, has academic qualifications in drama as well as in librarianship. It consists basically of a bibliographical course, one for the Batchelor of Librarianship students and the other for postgraduates. (The details of the course appear in Appendix IIa). The emphasis is on learning to assess and criticise the efficiency of bibliographical tools in the field of Drama. The postgraduate option is more detailed, extending beyond bibliography into the difficulties arising in theatre collections, with special reference to classification problems. The existence of the nearby University College of Wales Department of Drama enables the library school to offer students the possibility of a University of Wales Joint Honours Degree in Drama and Librarianship.

In the States, there has been considerably more discussion about training for theatre librarianship. The attitude towards theatre collections in libraries and museums is definitely a more positive and favourable one. As early as 1936, Rosamond Gilder wrote [6]: "Theatre collections, theatre libraries, theatre museums are necessary adjuncts of production (that is, play production) and once that production is completed, they become the ultimate guardians and preservers of its immortal life".

I am not sure whether we have even arrived at these conclusions in this country.

In 1959, a course in theatre librarianship was offered at Columbia University School of Library Service, as it was then called. Lectures were held on the theory of administering, processing and cataloguing of theatre materials. Card catalogues, cross-

reference files and theatre subject headings were examined and analysed. In an article in Library Journal,[10] 1957, G.W. White outlined what she considered to be the essential qualification of a theatre librarian, illustrating the degree of professionalism sought after, if not actually found, by American employers in this field. She emphasised the need for wide ranging knowledge, including the history of theatre and world drama, related theatre arts, familiarity with backstage activities and terminology and the business aspects of the theatre. The librarian's personal qualifications should reflect a great interest in the theatre and "initiative, enterprise and imagination, to enable him to contribute to the development of this relatively new profession". Even in America, however, they are now coming up against problems. A course was offered by the Florida State University School of Library Science and Theatre in conjunction with the Charles MacArthur Center for American Theatre (See Appendix IIb), during the academic year 1976-1977, after a 1975 survey of special theatre collections by the Center "revealed that the lack of trained staff personnel is one of the most pressing general problems of libraries related to theatre scholarship".[11] The programme offered was "designed to add the speciality of theatre librarianship to the basic core of professional study. Graduates will be especially prepared to hold positions in theatre and theatre arts collections, special libraries and museums". The course was offered to previously qualified persons, to those with no library qualifications but a degree in theatre, music, dance, literature or related disciplines and to those already working in theatre libraries. Unfortunately, the course never got off the ground. I learnt from Mr. Antony Croghan (Polytechnic of North London) that there had not been enough appropriately qualified applicants for the course. Since a degree was a prerequisite this illustrated that many staff employed in theatre libraries or collections had neither degree nor library qualifications and were therefore not eligible for entry to the course.

We would be unwise to model ourselves on American lines and press for training courses. The States have drama schools and academic courses running into the thousands. As early as 1932, there were at least 68 theatre collections in museums and libraries, so the number employed in these libraries is quite considerable. However, it is interesting to speculate that in another fifty years we may

have enough libraries to require specialist training for theatre librarians. To those who believe there is nothing particularly unique to theatre librarianship, I would ask them to consider the handling of unmanageable material such as playbills, cuttings, photographs, designs, programmes, all of which require expert indexing, handling and preservation. I am certain that were many of these valuable collections adequately staffed with appropriately qualified librarians, they would be amongst the leading theatre information centres in the world.

4. FINANCE: "A SEARING INDICTMENT"

"I daresay you have discovered that it is utter lack of finances that explains the less than wraith like existence of theatre librarianship in the United Kingdom".

Thus wrote the RADA librarian in a communication to myself, a rather apt quote to open this somewhat depressing subject, for the most obvious single reason for the problem of many theatre collections in this country is their complete lack of financial support. It is not only during this economic crisis facing us now that they have had their problems. Many have always had to struggle on without the promise of a stable and assured income. Probably the worse off are those linked with private institutions and associations, and the better off are comparatively rich through association with an educational body, or because they are government funded like the V and A.

4.1. Methods of Finance

The Library of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art receives £1100 per annum for its normal (or should we say abnormal?) functioning, and an extra £200 for music. This may seem not unreasonable for a very small - but growing - library, until one deducts £10 per week for the librarian during term-time, £4 a session for the library school student and £1 per hour for the volunteer students before one has even begun to think of buying books. If a rough calculation is performed, this leaves a very small sum indeed to buy books at an average cost of £5-£12 each. Prior to September 1977 the bookfund was only £600. As above average losses are sustained by the library, these are covered by the £2 deposit which each student must pay towards library membership and which, in future, will be included in the £10 caution money which all students pay. RADA itself receives no government grant. The money is obtained from students' fees - approximately £450 per term - part of the royalties from Shaw's plays and a third of the Shaw Estate. This is a largely frozen asset but big enough to have incurred the loss of the government grant in the 1960's. The Central School of Speech and Drama is very much better off and its library naturally reflects this. It used to be a self-supporting institution, much the same as RADA is now. In 1972, it became a grant-aided body under the auspices of I.L.E.A., and is financially guaranteed by them. It has been designated by I.L.E.A. as "an independent specialist establishment". [12]

The librarian considers this an ideal situation, combining, as she described it: "the maximum of support with the minimum of interference". The size of the bookfund in 1976-1977 amounted to £7,000 from 1977-1978 it was £8,820 and from 1978-1979 it was £10,000. This is absolute riches compared with what many theatre collections are struggling to survive upon. It purchases books, periodicals, binding, stationery and allows for duplicate copies of particular books in demand from students. However, this bookfund has to cover purchases not only in the drama and theatre subject field but also for the education aspect of the Teacher Training Course and for the Speech Therapy Course.

The Bristol Theatre Collection was recognised in the HMSO report: Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries [13] as "one of considerable value not only to historians of the theatre, but also to those planning theatres for the future. It is less of a museum than a library from which material is used for teaching in the University . . . it is completeness and ready availability of its material for use that gives this impressive collection its unique value in the study of the theatre".

The report was written before the appointment of a full-time permanent curator, and suggested that the Collection should be assured of a "regular purchase grant", that is, the grant in aid of purchases by provincial museums. It still does not receive such a grant.

Shortly after the report, Bristol received new accommodation for the Collection and a full-time keeper who was responsible for designing the library. Finance for the new accommodation was obtained from the University Grants Committee. At the moment, money is supplied by the Drama Department for much of the bookstock, although the Collection is administered by a separate trust and the keeper is not responsible to any faculty of the University. However, it is housed by the Drama Department, and naturally drama students find the resources far more convenient to use than those housed in the main library. The keeper attempts to raise finance from sponsors in local industry, who become patrons of the Collection. The Friends of the Theatre Collection has recently been formed, and has become a registered charity. It is hoped that Friends will give financial support to the acquisitions of new material. The subscription to the Society will be £3 per annum and this should swell the income. However, private societies often

find that subscriptions are eaten up by costs of administration, such as production and postage of newsletters. As this is a collection which is becoming used more and more heavily by professors and other theatre scholars, from this country and overseas, it is certainly one worthy of better financial support.

Public collections tend to be in the most financially secure position, despite the recent cutbacks in public expenditure. The librarian at Wakefield, centre of the Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection, saw no financial threat to the scheme in the near future due to the fact that the authorities involved in the area are well served and value the scheme, which is one of the largest collections of music and drama in the country. The schools need the service since it saves them immense costs being able to borrow rather than be forced to buy playsets. Here, then, is a drama library making a direct impact on the surrounding community. Other theatre libraries must equally make their mark if they are to gain better financing and staffing.

As the scheme is a co-operative venture, the financial load is fairly evenly spread on each authority. The Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection consists of 10 participating authorities. Each authority pays an annual subscription based on population and a further £3 per set borrowed by any organisation within that authority, thus making the sum paid proportionate to the amount borrowed. Out of £14,000 allotted to Wakefield for book buying in 1976-1977, approximately £3,500 was spent on drama texts alone. The bookfund for the current year is £20,780, £4,350 being allocated to Drama.

The library belonging to the British Theatre Association has fallen on hard times, not that life has ever been easy for it. An article in The Sunday Times [14] recently reported its difficulties: "Inflation has got another arts organisation by the throat. But instead of uttering a strangled cry the British Theatre Association is trying self-help. It is putting up membership fees and retreating from its two elegant London houses to just one". High rates are the cause of the retreat.

"Somehow the libraries (lending and reference) are kept going by one devoted full-time librarian . . . and several part-timers. But they are desparately in need of help to sustain their remarkable efficiency". Finance is dependent upon subscription, recently

increased from £7 to £9, though there is also a basic subscription rate of £4.50 which excludes use of the libraries, and the charges additional to the subscription for the loan of playsets. For an additional £3, members are given extra borrowing rights.

When the Association first began in 1919, it had a series of grants from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. It now receives small contributions from the Arts Council, British Council and the Department of Education and Science.

The increased subscription charges could lead to fewer renewed memberships, although the librarian expects those who cancel their membership to rejoin six months later. It is to be hoped she is proved right. Due to the enforced move, the greatest problem now will be the cramped quarters in which the service will have to continue. Unfortunately, the library closes throughout the month of August which is an additional disadvantage to members wishing to use the collection.

There had once been hopes in some quarters that the BTA could be taken over by the Borough of Camden, who are noted for their promotion and support of the Arts. There was even a suggestion that the BTA should be housed on the site of the Central School of Speech and Drama. Unfortunately, nothing has come of any of these suggestions. We will only have ourselves to blame if the functions of a magnificent collection should slowly grind to a halt.

Another hard hit organisation was the Drama Library of the British Council. This library which operated an efficient service supplying British Council libraries abroad with contemporary texts and provided an enquiry service about British theatre has now closed, though fortunately not before I had a chance to interviews the librarian and ask her about the services which were being provided. The excellent Play Bulletin (see Appendix IVe) was discontinued some time before the closure of the library as the BC were no longer prepared to fund its publication. The library will be retained within the Drama Department of the BC as a 'dead' library with no librarian. Its reference stock will still be available for consultation by those working at the BC, and the newspaper abstracting service will still be maintained. A valuable collection of current information about British Playwrights, actors and theatres has been carefully built up over the years which will continue in existence. The Drama Department will

continue to obtain the occasional reference book needed by workers. Some of the Drama Library's duties - such as making up sets of plays to send abroad to BC representatives - will be taken over by the still extant Playreading Lending Library.

The library of the BTMA could really be in no worse situation than it is in already. It has no source of income! New books are obtained occasionally by the Society for Theatre Research who purchase a book and pass it on to the library. Sometimes benefactors donate material. In the past, Pitman have regularly contributed a copy of their Who's Who in the Theatre. As mentioned already, the librarian is unpaid. The University of London provide the housing space, heating, lighting and any stationery required. The collection urgently needs more space, better storage facilities and conservation material for its valuable ephemera. There is, however, a glimmer of hope for this collection. When the Theatre Museum is finally established at Covent Garden in the 1980's, the library, providing space is allocated as has been suggested, could move with it, when the BTM and V and A collections physically merge. Finance permitting, it could then become a growing collection (at the moment it is a very static one), and its impressive collection of unindexed playbills, programmes, manuscripts, and prompt copies (including those regularly donated by the Royal Court) may be accessible through the services of a full-time cataloguer.

The British Theatre Museum itself, at Leighton House (now closed and officially part of the Theatre Museum) had also been struggling for many years with inadequate financing, so little wonder that the library could have no share of the cake. It was formed in 1957 "as a charitable trust empowered to receive gifts and bequests, to make purchases, and to hold theatrical material on behalf of the nation".[15] It was reliant on a grant from the Coulthurst Trust for 1960 onwards, who gave £1,000 per annum for a period of five years and this was subsequently renewed annually until 1973. The rest of the finance was supplied by subscription to the Association, and from auctions organised to raise money, held at the former Wright Hepburn Gallery. These consisted of the sale of costume and scenery designs, donated by theatre artists. The museum received a small purchase fund but many purchases were made privately by wealthy people belonging to the Association. A Friends of the Theatre Museum has recently been founded (similar

to Bristol's idea), so purchases can continue to be made via the Friends. This group has now replaced the BTMA. In the past, BTM has several times been threatened with closure and has been saved only by the generous donations from the City Corporation, several London Boroughs and the above mentioned auctions. Funds, premises and staffing are therefore gravely inadequate with huge problems in storage and conservation but once again it is hoped that Covent Garden, saviour of all, will come to the rescue just in time. The Theatre Museum has finally be recognised by the Government as a project worthy of support, and has been allocated £350,000 by the D.E.S. and D.o.E from 1978-1980 for the conversion of the Covent Garden Flower Market. The collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum (The Gabrielle Enthoven Collection) has always been government funded, since the whole museum comes under the jurisdiction of the D.E.S. The BTM were fortunate enough to be able to join forces with the V and A collection, where its chances of gaining financial support were considerably better than when it survived alone. What concerns me is the fate of the small, unrecognised collections who have not yet "got in on the act". Valuable collections are hidden away at Sadlers Wells and the Old Vic as part of the Vic-Wells Association libraries but there is little chance of them receiving financial support. A happier story is the fate of the Mander and Mitchenson Collection, now privately owned but bequeathed by the owners to the Borough of Lewisham who will take over its financing and organisation in about two years time. The original plan had been to give the collection to the National Theatre, an offer that was accepted in 1950. In 1967, it was clearly stated that the new National Theatre should include housing for this collection and that:

"the documentary material bequeathed to the NT should be available at all times to students and other interested in research and not merely a closed shop for the purposes of the NT itself". [16]

However, the NT built its premises without providing the 1,500 square feet of space which had been agreed upon by Parliament as the required amount. [17] Fortunately, the Borough of Lewisham stepped in to give the collection a new home at Beckenham Park Mansion. The collection which, up to this stage, has been entirely self-supporting, deriving income from reproduction rights from items in the collection, from research fees, exhibitions fees and the publication of books on the theatre by Ray Mander and Joe

Mitchenson, has been handed over to a trust for the interim period before Lewisham fulfil their commitments. There are at least therefore a few bright patches in the overall dismal scene of theatre collection finances.

5. CATALOGUING AND INDEXING

5.1. Traditional cataloguing

The problems of cataloguing theatrical material are immense, even when the required quantity of staff and financial resources is available, though this seems generally to be unacknowledged by the library profession. After visiting collections, assessing methods and problems of cataloguing, I now find it incredible that so little attention has been devoted to the specialist field of theatre and performing arts librarianship. The subjects of Law, Medicine and Music have all be recognised as presenting special problems in the provision of library services; theatre collections likewise have their difficulties, not the least being that of cataloguing.

The nature of the subject requires very detailed and expert cataloguing, and qualities of patience and perseverance from the cataloguer. This is due to the disparate nature of the material, particularly noticeable at Bristol and in the library of the BTM. These two collections have an impressive collection of ephemera or, as the Americans like to call it, "fugitive" material, a most descriptive adjective if we recall its root 'fugere' - to flee! In some collections, all attempts to "capture" and control ephemera have failed, due as usual to inadequate staffing. The difference between Bristol's largely catalogued collection and the BTM library's pile of unindexed but immensely valuable ephemera was quite staggering - two very similar libraries, the one offering an excellent service, the other poverty - stricken and hence restricted in its work.

I would emphasise the need for experienced and preferably qualified staff, alert to the needs of their users and the multiple ways of approaching the subject. Subject cataloguing is probably the most neglected area in theatre librarianship, simply because it is so time-consuming and complex. The cataloguer of theatrical material has to anticipate every aspect of the many-faceted subject. For example, an enquirer checking on the history of a particular performance of a play may be interested in only one area which could be that of producer/director, actor, playwright, stage designer, stage design, theatre company, theatre building or period. Ideally, especially when dealing with ephemera such as a photograph or programme containing an amalgam of some of the above details, each separate entity should have a catalogue entry,

with appropriate cross-references. To ensure continuity of cataloguing, the librarian should keep an authority file, or some kind of controlled vocabulary, but I found little evidence that this was being done. Such a vocabulary or thesaurus would also assist those wanting to gain entry into the catalogue. Ideally, the catalogue should be user-oriented, so that the library can function adequately in the librarian's absence. This is all very obvious but is not being carried out in many libraries, nor are many librarians' minds open to fresh ideas and recent discoveries in the field of information retrieval.

Undoubtedly, the most carefully evolved system of cataloguing with regard to the user's needs was that of the Bristol Theatre Collection, where the keeper had attempted to cover every possible approach a student might take towards his subject. Catalogues included not only the usual author and broad subject catalogue, but much analytical cataloguing had been carried out so that a topic like Scenery and Costume is indexed by title of play, author, designer, director, actor and theatre. Playbills are indexed under Theatres (London) and Theatres (Provincial), arranged alphabetically by name of theatre collowed by the date, and number held at that date. They are also indexed by title of play. Broadsheets and Portraits are indexed by title and character respectively. There is also a Periodical Index with a title index, and an excellent system of analytical cataloguing of abstracts from periodicals, filed alphabetically under subject and/or author. Obituaries of famous actors are also indexed.

A collection of tapes is gradually being built up in the Collection in collaboration with the Audio-Visual unit of the University, so that relevant programmes can be taped. The tapes are also indexed, with details of the programme, date, principal actor and title of play or reading.

There is a special index to Theatres; these are indexed by name, with the dates of the article concerning the particular theatre:

eg. SHEFFIELD - Playhouse

1953-4, View of the Auditorium

Other indexes include architects (arranged by nationality), playscripts, prints (indexed under author/title, designer/artist, theatre, producer/director), Shakespeare, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Actors and a General Reference index, though I thought

the latter could pose problems as the user might be unsure about what would be included in this index, rather than in others. As all the other indexes are so specialised, presumably this contains miscellaneous items not easily slotted into a subject area.
The huge slide collection is at the moment indexed only chronologically and obviously will require detailed indexing at some later stage. For example, a slide of a twentieth century production of Moliere's Le Misanthrope produced by Jean-Louis Barrault, designed by Marcel Delbee, 1958, would ideally need entries for: title, author, producer, designer, notable actors, costume, scenery, lighting, stage type. This kind of detail has already been carried out in the Prints Catalogue. However, the cataloguing was by no means faultless, and some of the errors were so basic, it did make one wonder if a trained cataloguer would have avoided them. The subject catalogue was a strange mixture of an alphabetic and classified scheme, since basically it was a classified index with class numbers on the catalogue drawers, but within these broad classes, subjects were alphabetically listed. Titles, subjects and authors were interwoven, although there was also an author catalogue. This was obviously difficult to follow, since it was not a dictionary catalogue. Lack of consistent filing occurred so that at one stage, 'the' was filed but at other times it was ignored in the filing. In what passed for the author catalogue, one occasionally found subject entries. For example, National Costumes of Serbia by Nikola Arsenoric had an entry in the author catalogue under "Serbia: National Costume". There was also no easily apparent index to the classified catalogue to which users could refer. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to see useful cataloguing and indexing being carried out by a theatre collection. It may be unfair but useful to draw comparisons with other collections and an obvious example is the BTM library.
The library contains a wide range of material - much of it valuable and out of print, including many rare texts of plays. Even more valuable is its collection of ephemera including huge collection of photographs in an album belonging to a theatre agent, newspaper cuttings in personal scrap books belonging to people once famous in the theatre world, annual reports of companies such as Covent Garden, souvenir programmes (designed in some original form to mark the opening night of a play), and

prompt books sometimes containing the stage play licence obtained for performance. The Royal Court Theatre, and others, used to deposit all their typescripts (mainly not in print) of plays performed, sometimes sending them unnamed, making the librarian's task no easier.

The majority of this collection of ephemera is unindexed and therefore totally useless. Material lies locked away in bundles, ironically too valuable to be housed on the open shelves, but no researcher could discover its true value short of wading through each item individually. It seems hard to believe that the heart of the living theatre - London - should have so little regard for posterity that it fails to provide capital to ensure the indexing and permanent preservation of material such as this.

The library faces a major time-consuming task in that it has to duplicate catalogue entries so that a simple entry is placed in the central catalogue of the Senate House Library, several floors away from the BTM library. No subject entry can be made as the main subject catalogue is classified according to Bliss, and the theatre collection uses Library of Congress. It is probable that many of the students are quite unaware of the collection's existence.

The basic indexes are those of author and subject, though the subject entries are very limited, referring to a theatre, place or author as a subject. The librarian is now attempting to index some of the newspaper clippings, collecting together material on, for example, one particular actor. This is a slow, arduous process, since the librarian is limited in time. It is hoped that if the material transfers to Covent Garden, the scrapbooks and albums will be taken apart and analytically indexed.

Ironically, if the collection were better indexed, and word spread of its immense value, the librarian would be unable to cope with the deluge of enquiries and increased number of visitors. As it is, the library could hardly be described as heavily used.

I have probably just described the two absolute extremes which could be found in the theatre library world. The other collections tend to fall somewhere between, some below and some above average depending very much on availibility of staff and finance.

Naturally, the cataloguing at the BBC Reference Library (Drama Section) was efficiently carried out. Things are made easier for them since they have a central cataloguing department which deals with the books for the Drama Section. These entries are

interfiled in the main catalogue for the whole Reference Library, but separate indexing is carried out by the Drama Librarian for the collection of plays and there is therefore a separate Play Catalogue. An Information Index indexes every miscellaneous item of interest to the library which acts as a quick reference file for enquiries. There is also a Birthday index worked by date order. In some cases the entry for an actor in any index carries his date of birth (and death) in case the reverse query, asking for the birth date of an actor, is needed. The emphasis is on providing rapid and accurate information on the theatre when requested.

The librarian had very usefully compiled an index to The Stage as amazingly this has no index commercially produced, and backfiles are useless without one. So, an Index of Forthcoming Productions is created from the issues of The Stage, indexing the title of the play, the name of the theatre, the date when performance is scheduled, and the date of The Stage issues announcing it. When the plays are running, the information is then transferred to the file of Current Productions.

Wakefield's collection is geared for the use of the general public and especially amateur dramatic groups in Yorkshire. The catalogue entries for specific plays naturally have to be quite detailed in the amount of information given, to save the time of the user. The standard format for a play is as follows:

OWEN, Armitage 822 OWE

Owen, Armitage

Fool's Paradise. A Comedy in three Acts

French 1951, 6/- (French's acting edition - No. 1255)

ACTS	CAST	
	3m	6w
FEE	SETS	
	1 interval	
TIME	COSTUME	
	Modern	
TYPE		
	Comedy in a Welsh Setting	

Sheffield possesses a Play Collection, similar to Wakefield's. On its catalogue entry, there is a brief resume of the plot, slightly fuller than Wakefield's. It also has a cast index, which chronologically indexes plays under the number of male characters required, with the number of female characters following, on the same card. This was devised to solve problems of amateur dramatic groups who had a dearth of male actors!
Wakefield's Drama Assistant has produced a catalogue in bookform, so that all participating libraries in the scheme can see what is held at the library. It is a list of Full Length Plays in Sets arranged primarily by author with a title index and a coding system indicating whether the play is a comedy, farce, tragedy, et cetera, with number and sex of characters and whether the play has a scene change. The next publication will be a catalogue of one-act plays.

5.2 Computerised Cataloguing

The most exciting work I saw in progress was being carried out in a museum, not a library, but libraries could certainly profit from their example. At the Theatre Museum, quite a variety of methods of indexing and cataloguing material exists, not all of them ideal. The Theatre Museum faces a colossal problem in keeping its cataloguing up to date. Many of the catalogues are several years in arrears, huge stores of ephemera lie uncatalogued, and researchers have to rely on the staff's knowledge. The biggest problem, as always, is subject cataloguing.

It is hoped, however, that many of these problems might be solved by the advent of computerisation. I was fortunate enough to visit the TM during a most interesting pilot scheme under the control of a specially appointed cataloguer. (Up to this point, there had been no cataloguer at the museum). Work is being started to catalogue the Harry R. Beard collection, which contains early French and Italian designs and engravings. In the computerised pilot scheme, a finding list only is being drawn up, so there will be no comprehensive cataloguing. For each item a series of headings is worked out by the cataloguer, and as it is indexed it is given a reference number of ten digits. Significant name, such as artist, engraver, actor, character (the latter specially formulated by the cataloguer as a useful entry point) are input to the computer, which will "lift" each name according to which sequence is requested. One could ask, for example, for everything held by the TM on Figaro (in this particular collection) and the results would be printed in one large sequence. All material is divided according to whether it is a print, drawing, or photograph and the computer can sort the results by form. There are a few unlimited fields, known as multiple fields where any number of subject headings is possible, otherwise the cataloguer has to limit the choice of heading, as each different heading increases the cost. A general description of the item can also be provided by the computer, such as 'etching', 'lithograph' and the condition and size of the item.

The particular scheme I saw in the TM was the first test case. If the scheme proves successful, the rest of the material can start to go on the computer. The only reason funds were obtained for the test run was because the experiment was on a finite collection. The success of the scheme could prove beyond doubt the usefulness of computers in this field, and halve the present problems of cataloguing faced by the TM. If such a scheme could be applied in theatre libraries, it could mean more sophisticated cataloguing, enabling the searcher to retrieve information from a variety of approaches, with the possibility of an on-line information retrieval system, allowing the searcher to interrogate the computer to discover the holdings of the collection and co-ordinating search terms to retrieve exactly what he needs.

5.3. Subject Headings

The only collection I saw using subject headings (apart from

adulterated Sears) as a guide to its cataloguing was in the Theatre Museum. Elizabeth Glass compiled A Subject Index for the Visual Arts [18] specially for the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The TM used the large impressive section on the Theatre, since they possess a lot of illustrative material. Libraries also could no doubt benefit from its use with adaptations to suit their own needs. The index was originally compiled because a growing number of users now look for illustrations, not according to artists' names but by subject or specific theme. Graham Reynolds, then keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings and Paintings wrote in the Foreword:

"To ensure an accurate reply to such enquiries it is necessary to construct a subject index which gives a reliable guide to the contents, as the artists' index does to the authorship of the works in the collection. This in its turn demands a scaffolding of themes and motifs under which the subject matter of a particular item is to be entered, forming the basis of analysis both while the index is being compiled and when it is consulted". [19]

Glass explains in her Introduction that headings were compiled to assist the staff in cataloguing but also:

"it acts as a guide to members of the public using the Department's resources, since the subjects for which they are enquiring can usually be resolved into one or more of the headings given in this list". [20]

A list of subject headings in use is provided, with 'see also' references, suggesting areas for further study, and instructions for use of these headings. In Part II, a list of cross-references only is given.

"Its purpose is to provide the reader with a guide to the correct subject headings in Part I, and to prevent the proliferation of headings by the indexes". [21]

She then gives worked examples of entries for prints and drawings, using the subject headings from her list as analytical index entries.

Something on similar lines should be compiled for use in theatre libraries to guide and control staff in their cataloguing, and help users in their searching. One of the biggest problems a theatre library comes up against is the total lack of research into the cataloguing of theatre collections. There is no English list of subject headings for the theatre library, though there

is the impressive American Theatre Subject Headings [22] of the New York Public Library Reference Department, intended for use in the Catalog of the Theatre Collection, now at the Lincoln Center Library and Museum of the Performing Arts. It would be useful to see this list actually in use in this country, if only as an experiment to see if it assisted or improved the standard of cataloguing. Certainly, every topic imaginable connected with the theatre seems to have been covered such as:

FREAKS - SIAMESE TWINS

FREE-LANCE ACTORS

HAIRDRESSING see COSTUME - HAIRDRESSING

HOAXES see THEATRE - HOAXES

Each subject is"minutely classified" where necessary:

TAXATION - ACTORS - (by country) - (by year)

DRAMA - DIALECT AND IDIOM - (by nationality) - (by region) - (by state)

Very slowly, people are becoming aware of the need for research into subject cataloguing, as can be seen from the TM experiment, but unfortunately this is happening at a time when many interesting projects and ideas could be crushed because of unwillingness of authorities to finance such specialist schemes.

5.4 Collections in libraries and record offices

There are vast quantities of material in London and provincial public libraries, record offices, local archives and history collections, scattered throughout the country. Diana Howard is compiling a sequel to her Directory,[3] covering collections outside London. What she has discovered so far reveals much that is uncatalogued, lying in bundles, the people responsible for them hardly aware of their great value. One letter received by Ms. Howard, from the Record Office of the County Council of Hereford and Worcester concerning her query about theatrical material read:

"We do have a few playbills and programmes embedded in large collections but these are of no real significance to Theatre History"!

More often than not, even in libraries, there are no catalogues

for this type of material. Occasionally there are lists or inventories drawn up. Sometimes material is subsumed under either Music, Fine Arts or English Literature sections, and is therefore more difficult to unearth.

6. CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Schemes used by libraries visited

Although more research has been carried out into classification schemes than in any other area of theatre librarianship, libraries are reluctant to accept innovation. This is understandable when one realises the gigantic task involved in reclassifying a library even with a normal staff quota. Unfortunately, this means schemes which have been specially designed for theatre stand no chance of being implemented in a library, and their suitability as classification schemes cannot be judged.

Appendix III shows the various schemes used by libraries visited during the course of the investigation, the Dewey Decimal Classification being the commonest used and three collections not classifying any of their material. The Play Library, BBC, would have gained little through classification as their collection consisted solely of scripts, arranged in alphabetical order of dramatist. A title and subject approach could be gained through the catalogue. The British Council Drama Library was very small with the librarian permanently there dealing with enquiries and on the whole she was the only one physically using the collection. The RADA library now has a rough classification system, whereas before it had none due to lack of staff and time.

All those using DC were naturally experiencing problems because of the way material is split: drama at 812, 822 et cetera is separate from the theatre at 792, and commits:

"the cardinal sin of rigidly separating theatre as a mere 'recreation' from drama . . . . . duly sandwiched between each country's poetry and its prose fiction as an aspect of 'literature'". [23]

The Wakefield Music and Drama Library used broad divisions from DC as guides on the shelves using basically 792 - 792.028, 792.071 (heavily used as Theatre in Education), 799.09 (Theatre history) and the 800's for dramatic literature. Collected works of dramatists and individual plays are not classified but shelved alphabetically.

The librarian at CSSD had gone as far as considering other systems. She had looked at Simon Trussler's scheme [23] and had been impressed by it. She had considered the scheme used by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, but found it too complex, and also the London Education Classification. Nothing came of these

deliberations because of the colossal task of reclassifying the library. She had therefore made various alterations to DC. As with all theatre/drama libraries using this scheme, she had simply arranged all plays in a straight alphabetical sequence. She also quite skilfully used numbers which Dewey had left vacant, for example:

792.04 Sound

Where Dewey had placed two terms at one number, she separated them out. For example:

792.025 Setting

Scenery, lighting

is not useful to a specialist library. The librarian created an extra number

792.0251 Lighting

DC's '822' was also much amended. 'Classical Drama' was inserted at 822.1. At 822, a note inserted by the librarian instructs: "Texts of individual authors followed by criticism of individual authors: in alphabetical order irrespective of original language". and

"Criticism covering works of more than one author: in chronological order".

She had also further subdivided at 822.33 for periods in dramatic history.

The BTM library was using a somewhat dated version of the Library of Congress Classification: 1915 to be precise! As the collection is mainly of historical interest to people, and few new books are added, the scheme is just about usable. The reason why this edition is used is because, once again, it would be impossible to reclassify the library with one part-time member of staff. Had the collection been a currently maintained one, the scheme would have been quite inadequate. There are no entries for modern concepts such as 'community' and 'street' theatre, and it is not really detailed enough for a specialist theatre collection, since it has no special slot for lighting, sound effects and other production aspects. For individual playwrights, the librarian uses the PR English Literature schedule, where there are divisions for named playwrights but the dated version reveals itself in the inadequate allocation for Shaw, squeezed into 5360 - 5368

The keeper of the Bristol Theatre Collection expressed satisfaction with the Bliss Bibliographical Classification, which, considering

it was designed for a general library, is extremely detailed in its theatre section. At least Bliss does acknowledge that drama and theatre should not be separated. Under "YX - Drama and Dramatics and the Theatre and Theatricals" he writes:
"Drama and Theatre are aesthetically and historically interwoven, tho a distinction inheres in the etymological derivation from two Greek words for acting and seeing; the Theatron was the place where the drama, or acting, was seen. We usually speak of dramatic literature as representing action and deeds of intense human interest, while theatrical art is deemed spectacular". [24]
Both this library, the BTM library and of course the RADA library had no class numbers on the spines of books. Bristol has class numbers inside the book which is not a great help when one is scanning shelves. A small key to the Bliss scheme was posted on the wall above the catalogue, corresponding with a plan of the library. Unfortunately, the plan did not work in practice. A new plan should be made every time the collection expands, since the books naturally move to new places. This was not done, the plan did not correspond with the shelving and so one had to search, looking inside books to check that the correct subject area had been found. This was caused simply because the books had no class marks on their spines. This was common among the small collections because unlike public libraries, they have no central administration where preparation of books can be carried out. Consequently, labelling is neglected since it is too time-consuming a task for a small staff.

6.2 Schemes drawn up especially for the theatre

There are two schemes in existence in this country for the classification of the theatre, which I can only mention and barely criticise since neither are in operation in a library. These are: A Faceted Classification for the Performing Arts [25] by Antony Croghan, and Simon Trussler's A Classification for the Performing Arts .[23]

6.21 Defining and classifying the subject

Croghan gives a useful essay on the nature of the performing arts, discussing why they present unique problems in classification. By their very nature, the performing arts are transient. A performance is given and can never be repeated in exactly the same manner except by mechanical means. Attitudes towards and interpretations of a dramatist can often fluctuate. Acting styles and dramatic schools

of thought continually change, sometimes according to the political and social climate of the day. As the theatre is a highly subjective art, problems arise when trying to define a subject for the purpose of classification. Those who write about the theatre also tend to write in a subjective fashion. This means the classifer can quite easily wrongly "class" a book by putting his own value judgement upon it, and distorting the original message of the book.

How should the plays themselves be classed? Croghan claims they should be in the drama library only as they relate to drama: "If these plays are to be treated as works of art in their own right, then they become part of English literature and must be classed with that subject by another scheme". [26]

I cannot agree with this. Surely dramatic works are primarily "works of art in their own right". The actor or director must study, understand and place his own interpretation upon the play himself before performing or producing it. It is this understanding of and belief in the play as a piece of creative art for which Billington pleaded in the passage already quoted from The Modern Actor.

Problems of terminology in such a subjective topic are therefore bound to be immense though they are not unique to the subject of theatre. Croghan argues that new terminology may be applied to a style already in existence, creating a new word but not a new subject. So one may finish up with "the same thing under two different names" or "two different things under the same name and so making them the same thing". [27] Surely the answer to this is to ensure the maintenance of an authority file or thesaurus, at the same time keeping the classification scheme updated so that a check is constantly kept on terminology.

Unfortunately, Croghan's scheme suffers from a complex and lengthy notation and there are major omissions in the index. The fact that Croghan had to publish the scheme himself indicates the appalling lack of financial support for this type of project. Trussler is rather severe in his criticism about it. Though he declines to name the scheme, it is obvious that the only other specialist scheme in existence is Croghan's. Trussler, like myself, dislikes the "labyrinthine notational complexity". He goes on: "So busy was it with ferreting out facets, base-metalled lodestone of librarianship, that it was very little concerned with the

relationship between subjects, and still less with balancing rigorous comprehensiveness with a pragmatic recognition that some subjects get many more books written about them than others".[28] Whether this is the case or not, the scheme cannot really prove or damn itself until we actually see it in operation in a library.

Trussler has had more success with his scheme, as it was published by the Commission for a British Theatre Institute, and has already had more publicity amongst librarians. He has also been able to use the scheme - and thus expand and develop it - in his regular compilation of the current bibliographies of theatre studies in each issue of Theatre Quarterly.

Trussler's scheme covers an extremely broad area, not limited merely to the performing arts or what we would normally understand by that term but extended also to sport and games because they often entail some actor-audience relationship. These subjects are irrelevant to our purpose but any library wishing to use the scheme could easily ignore these additional facets. The most attractive feature of the scheme, if we can go that far in its praise without ever having seen it in action, is its apparent flexibility. A library could adapt it to its own specialist slant. It possesses the potential for expansion, or can be contracted if used by libraries with small collections. It also provides a very detailed breakdown of the subject of theatre. Trussler's own examples serve to illustrate the level of detail. For example, Class CD, Psychology of Performance, is to be used primarily for "general studies of the impulse to assume roles", as compared with RD, Psychology of Acting, for works of practical use to the actor "who wishes better to understand the nature of what he is doing, and why he has chosen to do it".[29]

There is a possibility that some libraries might find the scheme too detailed fro their purposes, and certainly there are three main classes which most collections would use in preference to all others: Classes F, G and H which cover the history and criticism of European, British and American drama and threatre respectively. This could entail squeezing a lot of material into a small space, and leaving a lot of the notation unused, though a library could easily adapt other unused classes to its needs. The detailed 'Systematic Schedules' help to break down a particular subject more finely, either by form, or by theatre, performer, director, et cetera. The librarian is free to classify subjects by country

period or topic.

Unfortunately, there is no alphabetical index to the scheme, only the basic 'Outline of Subjects', and it would be more use to the practitioner if this could be provided. It would also have been helpful, as James Ellis [30] suggests in his review of the scheme, if Trussler had introduced a schedule for classifying ephemera. Ellis supplies a suggested schedule himself, requiring simply the use of lower case letters to be added to the main classes. For example, 'a' could represent a playbill, 'r' contract, 'v' a promptbook and so on.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, however, and I have not seen this system in operation. Ellis believes that it: "deserves the widest possible circulation and discussion among librarians, bibliographers and scholars if it is to establish itself as a useful standard and model in collections worldwide". [31] Unfortunately, I cannot see how that could possibly happen. Certainly librarians expressed an interest in the scheme, though not all were aware of its existence but few libraries could bear the expense and time involved in reclassifying. At the moment, it looks very much as though a worthwhile scheme will remain unused and untested.

It is therefore to individual libraries to pursue their own systems, adapting existing schemes as best they can. A.M.C. Kahn, [32] at the end of her introduction to Theatre Collections worked out a scheme based on Dewey's numerical system, with very much more detail though unfortunately she attempts to squeeze too many aspects of the subject under one number. It illustrates though that as far back as 1955, she was aware that:

"The problem of a classification scheme for theatre libraries is a pressing one . . . the writer would be very grateful for the views and suggestions of interested British librarians".

We are still waiting and hoping for those "interested British librarians" to make themselves known!

7. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CONTROL

How much control do theatre librarians have over the material they try to obtain for their users? Obviously, in all fields of librarianship, books must slip by the notice of librarians because of inadequate methods of publicising new material. The problem is exacerbated in theatre librarianship, since the literature is often of an ephemeral nature, although legislation has been passed to attempt to ease the situation.

In 1843, "An Act for Regulating Theatres" [33] stated that new stage plays or additions to old ones "intended to be produced and acted for Hire at any Theatre in Great Britain, shall be sent to the Lord Chamberlain of Her Majesty's Household for the Time Being, Seven Days at least before the first acting and presenting thereof with an Account of the Theatre where and the Time when the same is intended to be first acted or presented ..."

This Act was nullified by the present Theatres Act, [34] passed in 1968, which reads as follows:

"Where after the coming into force of this section there is given in Great Britain a public performance of a new play, being a performance based on a script, a copy of the actual script on which that performance was based shall be delivered to the Trustees of the British Museum free of charge within the period of one month beginning with the date of the performance, and the Trustees shall give a written receipt for every script delivered to them pursuant to this section".

In default of this, the person presenting the performance is liable to a fine of £5. This all sounds marvellous in theory and it would look as though very little could slip by without being formally noted. Apparently, the law is not being upheld. A representative of the British Library informed me that scripts are often not declared and much material which may not have been published is untraceable. Although the BL could do more to rectify the situation, it is not taking up the challenge in any way. This is certainly one area therefore, where there are loopholes.

7.1 Book Selection

Methods of book selection tend to be a little haphazard in this field, since there are so many sources where one might look for new publications, yet no single major source. Most of the staff interviewed used systematic methods to begin with using British

National Bibliography, British Books in Print, reviews in The Times Literary Supplement and in other major papers. One librarian commented that systematic method was hardly applicable to his library since he had so few funds to buy books, the majority of what he saw had to be rejected! The librarian at CSSD used The Bookseller for much new material. As well as the TLS, she also used The Times Educational Supplement, New Society, The Listener, reviews in theatre periodicals such as Plays and Players and especially Theatre Quarterly and Theatrefacts issued with it. She made good use of the J.W. MacKenzie secondhand book catalogues (specialists in out of print and antiquarian theatre books) which she recieved from secondhand book specialists. Two other useful secondhand booksellers dealing with the performing arts are Motley Books and J. and V. Vinden. The New Playwright Directory [35] published by Theatre Quarterly was especially handy for information about contemporary dramatists and their plays. For retrospective selection she used Baker's Theatre and Allied Arts. [36] The series published by Oxford University Press called Select Bibliographical Guides [37] edited by Stanley Wells are helpful in pinpointing areas of study. The annual exhibitions of specialist booksellers held by Clive Bingley which are now developing into the scale of a Frankfurt world bookfair are excellent places to pick up unusual and foreign material. The librarian also held accounts at Dillon's University Bookshop and Samuel French's Theatre Bookshop, an invaluable 'shop window' for new publications.

The Wakefield librarian criticised the fact that there was no specialist tools to assist book selection in the theatre. American books are not covered by BNB and much that is wanted on the theatre is American. He found that publishers resented his library buying whole sets of plays which could then be loaned many times to dramatic groups. Certainly, amateur groups could not function at all if they were forced to buy their own complete sets. The situation is so bad with music publishers that if parts of orchestral sets are lost, the library may find that publishers refuse to replace a single part but will only supply and be paid for a complete new set.

7.2. Standard Bibliographic Aids

This is, of course a vast area and whole books have been compiled

on guides to the subject of theatre. What follows therefore is a very brief outline of some of the most heavily used texts in some of the libraries visited.

There are areas which any theatre librarian could point to as being particularly barren in bibliographical signposting. For example, the librarian of the BBC Drama Section felt it would be useful if there could be a theatre equivalent to the International Index of Film Periodicals, [38] which covers illustrations in periodicals including foreign language periodicals, and has a title, subject and author index. There is no index to Plays and Players or to The Stage so the librarian has to compile her own if the retrospective volumes are not to become useless. Nothing is published which is detailed enough for a theatre librarian's work. British Humanities Index obviously includes drama and theatre but what is needed is an abstracting index which will concentrate on the theatre, an idea on which the British Theatre Institute are now working. The BBC librarian felt there ought to be an index which would cover photographs and prints in periodicals of stage design, theatres, performances, actors, directors, et cetera.

The British Theatre Institute is attempting to improve bibliographical control by sponsoring ventures such as Howard's Directory, [3] and indexing tools such as the Bibliography of Theatre and Stage Design, [39] a select list of books and articles published from 1960-1970. The BTI are planning many more directories and guides to the literature, once money starts to flow again.

The Society for Theatre Research have also been an important publisher of bibliographical guides, producing English Theatrical Literature 1559-1900. A Bibliography. [40] Locations are provided for the books listed, though only one is listed for each book, where the most perfect copy can be found. This publication was preceded by The Theatre of the British Isles excluding London. A Bibliography, [41] which extends beyond 1900 and includes books, periodicals as well as collections of playbills, programmes, press cuttings and manuscript materials. No locations are provided.

Since 1950, the STR:

"has set itself the aim of publishing each year one, or at the most two books, which make a distinct contribution to our knowledge

of the British theatre".

About fifteen years ago, an independent enquiry was organised by the London group of the STR to attempt to gain some form of control over material in London. Public libraries and some theatre collections were visited in an effort to produce a union catalogue of non-literary theatrical resources in London Metropolitan libraries. A card index was compiled which is still held at the premises of the STR. It was never published and now, of course, needs updating. It was valuable work because when the libraries' holdings were checked against those of the Enthoven Collection at the V and A, little duplication had occurred, and much new information had been discovered. The STR succeeded in producing a Catalogue of Theatrical Portraits in London Public Collections,[43] which is a handlist of portraits of theatrical performers giving the location and detailed description of the portraits. This is now out of print, which is unfortunate since the theatre needs as many of these types of publications as possible.

The American influence is of course very strong, with excellent publications from the Scarecrow Press such as: How to Locate Reviews of Plays and Films.[44] This described itself as: "The only existing guide for articles and illustrations concerning the stage and its players that have appeared in American and British periodicals". The F.W. Faxon Company have also done much in this area with its publication of indexes to one-act plays. These are immensely useful to amateur and professional theatre groups, containing play synopses, advice about cast and set requirements, fees and availability of unpublished or 'manuscript only' plays. (Samuel French produces a similar publication,[45] covering all types of plays and character combinations). Certainly, the Americans excel themselves in the number and variety of indexes produced on the subject of drama and the theatre. Unfortunately, they are bound to have some bias, though they do cover British and foreign publications, which ought to encourage publishers and librarians in this country to ensure production of more British indexes. There are so many indexes on the market at the moment, mainly American, often covering very similar ground but each with slight variations so that librarians feel compelled to buy each type to cover every eventuality. It would be more helpful if publishers could learn to co-ordinate rather than

compete with each other so that we have less overlapping and duplication.

Some libraries, mainly those with collections of playsets, are beginning to publish catalogues of their collections, notably Wakefield, Devon and Manchester. No theatre library in this country has published a complete catalogue of its collection though this would be an immensely useful tool. New York Public Library has produced one of its Theatre Collection despite the fact that it is not a rich institution. Possibly for the smaller collections a union catalogue would make more sense, but it is essential that researchers have more guidance when embarking on a search for material.

7.3 The use of computers in information retrieval for the Theatre

Computers are being installed in this country to help with every aspect of librarianship. Theatre libraries are at the moment unable to take advantage of computerisation because it is impossible to find finance for their normal functioning, without considering innovation. However, computers are here to stay and perhaps in another fifty years theatre libraries will be able to take advantage of them.

An interesting article has been published on this topic by Valeriu Moldoveanu in a Rumanian periodical, available in an appallingly translated version at the LA library, entitled "Information Science and the Theatre".[46] She reveals, surprisingly, that the computer has already been used to some extent in Rumania, controlling theatrical information. In the course of the article, she outlines all the aspects she believes should be documented in every theatrical performance, which if this could be achieved would produce an overwhelming mass of information, concerning the end product of the performance or the "birth process" of the production. Below 80% of this kind of information is collected with present methods of information retrieval and probably that percentage would be much lower in this country.

" . . . . . such a mass of information units can be organised and used under conditions of normal efficiency, only with the aid of a computer. The most adequate method would be, at present, that of co-ordinate indexing for the computer, based on controlled vocabularies, and later - a thesauri, in the sphere of the theatre and other related fields".[47]

The Rumanian plans are important, since the use of computers in

this subject could revolutionise the study and practice of the theatre, as we have already seen in one potential area - cataloguing. A body has been set up in Rumania called the Automated National Documentation and Record System in the Field of Culture and Arts (known more familiarly as SADENCA).

At present, theatrical material is scattered throughout libraries, museums, theatre and cultural institutions so that information on one topic may be held in all these separate places. There are no bibliographical retrieval tools to assist searchers. By not being able to use a systematic, centralised information system but having to base his search on "fragmentary, sometimes casual information or on simple assumptions or 'inspiration'," [48] the researcher has a chance of discovering only a part of the existing whole, a familiar story in this country also.

SADENCA will attempt to co-ordinate information by having a data bank consisting of the information memory, containing records, characteristics, and addresses of a great number of documents in original or copy form. The data bank will also have a documentary memory, "microminiatured according to diverse techniques", which means that information will be held in the form of microfilm, microcards, photographs, slides and magnetic tapes. For inputting data, a controlled theatre vocabulary is used, which will be connected in the SADENCA system with vocabularies existing in related fields, such as Literature, Music, Plastic Arts, Aesthetics, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, Education and Management. These vocabularies will allow co-ordinate indexing and retrieval of information items and documents.

At the time of the article's publication, an experiment was due to have been carried out on the Youth Theatre in Piatra Neamt. It has been calculated that a theatre may collect an average of one hundred documents in connection with each play production. The experiment planned to put all documentation collected by the above named theatre on to a computer, and to access it by means of a controlled vocabulary. If successful, the Youth Theatre would probably be the first theatre in Rumania and possibly in Europe to have its documentation placed on computer.

This is certainly a taste of things to come and something that interested bodies ought to persuade library and information science groups to support. Once again, the stumbling block is finance, an obstacle which will not disappear in the next few years.

8. EPHEMERA: METHODS OF COLLECTION, STORAGE AND PRESERVATION

Much has been written - notably by the Americans - about the importance of ephemera and the methods needed to preserve it, of which the majority of libraries I visited seemed totally unaware. However, the first important step is to actually get hold of the ephemera and this seems to present problems. The BTI, as I shall reveal in a later chapter, are particularly concerned about this, and want some form of national policy to be set up with regard to theatrical records. At the moment, major subsidised theatres such as the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company are deliberating retaining their prompt book, a valuable source to the theatre historian and the producer. The NT, since it came into existence, has its own archives, called 'bibles', containing the final prompt scripts for each play produced, and there is a plan being drawn up at present to send all their archives, after a five year lapse, to the Theatre Museum. However, lesser known companies may well be discarding or 'losing' material, and this has to be stopped.

There is always the danger that theatrical archives will be brought up by interested bodies from abroad. Fears were expressed in The Sunday Times [49] that original scripts from the BBC's Play Library might either be destroyed or sent abroad, if no suitable offer say from a university drama department was made. The Play Library is at the moment in the process of transferring 50,000 play scripts dating from 1923 onto microfilm, as the originals are taking up too much space. As I was able to witness, these originals comprise a valuable collection, many annotated by producers and actors, containing for example Louis MacNeice's play produced for radio by himself. There is also material relating to Dylan Thomas who was at one time a Reader for the BBC.

The article was immediately countered by Richard Hewlett, [50] Head of Reference and Registry Services who denied that there had been any danger of pulping the scripts:

"There are long-standing arrangements whereby the original of any microfilmed script . . . is kept if it is thought to be of any archival significance".

He implied that many of the scripts would be preserved in the BBC's Written Archives Centre, and would be offered to universities here or in America only after careful consideration. The rumour

seems therefore to have been scotched, but fears remain nonetheless that valuable material could slip out of our hands through lack of awareness of the intrinsic value of a document.

A scheme for a central theatre archive, which is what the BTI want, would seem to make sense. Plans could also be made for theatres to deposit material on permanent loan with an archive centre. This would help theatres who do not wish to part with records but cannot maintain a collection within their own building.

Three of the collections I visited were collecting ephemera. Not all were taking special measures to preserve it. The BBC Drama Section has a large collection of programmes, magazines and newspaper clippings, some of which are mounted on large pieces of card and covered in Transpaseal to protect the documents against damage. However, as the collection is consulted only by the librarian and her assistants, it does not undergo continuous handling, so preservation is not as important as in other collections.

The most impressive methods were being carried out by the Bristol Theatre Collection, probably due to the fact that the prime concern of the Collection used to be with visual material only and so the keeper has had experience of handling material more suited to a museum than a library. The keeper had designed equipment to house some of the ephemera. These are boxes, roughly the size of quarto books, made to her specifications by a local paper company. They have a flap in the top half of one side of the box, which drops down to reveal the contents of the box. These can be examined quite easily without removing them since each document is clearly labelled on its outermost edge. Very flimsy material is preserved by being mounted on hard card. Documents needing special care because of their delicate state, such as very old theatre programmes and playbills can be treated in the basement of the library. This houses a machine which 'dry-mounts' material permanently and helps preserve the document. A lot of the material housed at Bristol is very valuable, such as Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's costume designs and similar priceless art works which must be protected against the light and damp.

Despite the valuable material held at the BTM library, nothing has been done to ensure against deterioration. Most of the ephemera is 'stored' in boxes awaiting brighter days when staff and money are available to rescue it.

I was given to understand that little is carried out even at the

Theatre Museum to preserve ephemera. Most of the delicate material is placed in acid-free bags, called Krystal bags, which are plastic, transparent and specially designed for the large collection of programmes. The most common method, in all collections, is to store material in folders or boxes which may be adequate if the material is not constantly handled. Some of the older material does require careful housing in an acid-free, temperature-controlled atmosphere. The Americans are well up in this field and I would recommend as useful sources of information some of the articles written on the subject in American library science journals, such as George Freedley's chapter on "Fugitive Material: its Care and Preservation," [6] L.A. Rachow's article: "Care and Preservation of Theatre Library Materials" [51] and B.H. Lee's "Theatrical Visual Arts Ephemera: Care and Protection". [52]

It is also important to have flexible storage equipment for ephemera as its size varies and files of differing dimensions will eventually save space. 'Hanging envelopes' suspended from iron rods within a verticle file are probably the most useful means of storage, where material can be examined at a glance, without having to remove the whole envelope. All material should of course be clearly labelled, unfortunately a time-consuming but necessary task.

Ephemera can create all kinds of problems because of its irregular size, its sometimes questionable value and the fact that originally it was not intended for permanent use, hence its name. How does a librarian make the difficult decision about what to accept and what to reject in this enormous field? Is it really possible to attempt to store and catalogue every kind of ephemera from the local theatre or arts group? If this is <u>not</u> feasible, how can one possibly forecast what will serve as useful research material to theatre and social historians of the twenty-first century? All these decisions have to be taken by the theatre librarian, and he must have the awesome responsibility of deciding what future researchers will be permitted to see and handle. Judging by the odd and fascinating assortment of ephemera on display at the BTM including cigarette cards, badges, theatre tickets and wonderful examples of souvenir programmes such as a real lavender bag for a production of Pinero's <u>Sweet Lavender</u> (Terry's Theatre, 1888), one wonders how any of it survived being discarded as rubbish

and existed till today it forms a record of and social commentary on the theatre traditions of the past.

9. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN COLLECTIONS AND LIBRARIES

To what extent are theatre libraries and collections communicating with each other in any way and what benefits could be derived from co-operation? On the whole, the picture is not an inspiring one. Most libraries tend to operate in isolation and there is no system of inter-library lending between specialist collections. It is doubtful whether they even use the national inter-library lending schemes.

There is some informal co-operation going on between some collections the Theatre Museum is in touch with the major private, semi-private and public collections in London. They do not exchange information on holdings but "we co-operate to our mutual advantage in dealing with written queries", according to the Senior Research Assistant. The Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Service is itself a co-operative venture and an extremely successful one, but the only one of its kind in this subject area. For inter-library loans, Wakefield uses the British Library and the London Library. Groups outside Wakefield's local network are permitted to borrow material on the understanding that there is reciprocal borrowing. Some of these borrowing groups (of which there are about twelve to fifteen) are as far flung as Brighton and Cumbria. The Librarian expressed a need for a co-ordinating body for theatre libraries so that each could know about the work of the others. He also thought that union catalogues ought to be produced to aid inter-lending, though he felt that some libraries might be reluctant to lend. Lending playsets beyond the official membership often meant less control over the stock.

Bristol's keeper was also anxious that there should be attempts to provide a union catalogue. She was one of the few librarians who was aware of the aims of the BTI. It certainly seemed that awareness of what others were doing in the same field stimulated enthusiasm and receptiveness to new ideas. She was in close contact with the TM in London and from this relationship had come the decision to transfer the Beerbohm Tree Collection from London to Bristol. Between them, they watch for valuable theatre research resources which might be in danger of going abroad and attempt to raise funds to buy them.

The Central School of Speech and Drama occasionally receive requests for loans from other drama schools and have a lot of contact with the Rose Bruford Drama School in Kent. The librarian recognised a need for a formal policy of inter-library lending as

so little was being carried out but this would need staff to supervise it. In a public library system there is usually one member of staff appointed to organise the inter-library loans. This obviously could not be done in a library with only two staff and without union catalogues to support this scheme.

The BBC Drama Section made considerable use of the BTA library for particularly difficult and obscure queries, where the BTA's resources and experience could be of assistance. They also had informal contact with the National Operatic and Dramatic Association of which they were members, and the British Film Institute.

This seems to be the extent of organised co-operation by libraries with each other and with museum collections. Although the Curator of the Theatre Museum had expressed to me the belief that "informal and good relations are always best", this co-operation is formalised at an annual conference of theatre museums. Unfotunately, the libraries have not got that far yet.

9.1. Publications

A lot of useful work has been carried out by individuals promoting knowledge about theatre collections, through publication. A.M.C. Kahn in her Theatre Collections [32] 1955, attempted to publicise the holdings and services of libraries and collections by asking representatives from various types of library to write about their particular area. The pamphlet did, however, select only one or two from each category of national, public, special and private collections, and was restricted to the Greater London area. This publication had been preceded by Gilder and Freedley's Theatre Collections in Libraries and Museums: An International Handbook, [6] later updated by the Performing Arts Libraries and Museums of the World [4] which is still the most comprehensive international directory. Diana Howard's work [3] updates and expands upon Kahn's pamphlet, giving telephone numbers and addresses but already this directory is becoming dated due to the changes which have been forced upon some of the collections. Howard is currently working upon an equivalent directory to cover the provinces.

This kind of publication is invaluable since it helps librarians to keep in touch with each other, and to publicise each collection. I think every librarian I interviewed voluntarily mentioned Howard's publication which illustrates how very useful it has proved. Certainly, I rarely went a day during the course of my investigations without consulting it.

There is still much that can and should be done however. There is no sophisticated network between theatre libraries (excepting the Yorkshire scheme) such as appear in America. The Belknap Collection of Performing Arts (University of Florida) has set up an exchange programme for duplicate materials with other performing arts libraries. American libraries also solicit performing arts organisations for material. The Charles MacArthur Center for American Theatre: Resource Division plans to have an American Theatre Information Center, and to locate every catalogued item in the State dealing with the American theatre and to make this bibliographical information available to all theatre collections via a computer information network. [53] America does have a better excuse for having such sophisticated schemes: it has over 1,200 drama colleges compared with just over a dozen in London. Nevertheless, one has to start somewhere. Theatre librarians themselves are keen for more co-operation and communication, but unfortunately do not seem capable themselves of organising anything further than what already exists.

9.2. Professional Organisations and Conferences

There is no professional organisation in this country for librarians and curators of theatre collections though there are probably sound reasons why this should be so. I cited in my introduction other bodies of specialist librarians who have formed their own associations, inside and outside the Library Association but on the whole their numbers are larger than those "select few" involved in theatre librarianship. This is the biggest single reason why a theatre library association or a group within the LA could not be set up with a great measure of success. I was at first surprised and disappointed to find there was no comparable group with the splendid American Theatre Library Association, but after discussion with many theatre librarians and seeing the difficulties under which they struggle to survive, I have been influenced by their general pessimism. There are excellent reasons why a group should be established, but there are equally strong factors fighting against it.

9.21 Attitudes of librarians and curators

The majority of people whom I interviewed expressed an interest in the idea of a theatre library association, or a group representing their interests within the LA, but many also had grave reservations. Others automatically said they thought it was

a good idea but obviously without having given the question any real thought.

The belief that there were not enough theatre librarians to form a group was a common one, though there are actually many more than one at first imagines, especially with the growth of drama colleges and university drama departments, many of which have their own libraries. This view produces a vicious circle: there are too few librarians, it is claimed, to make a group worhtwhile. There is therefore no co-ordinating body to represent the interests and needs of theatre librarians, no interchange of ideas between practitioners in similar fields. As a consequence there is little innovation or growth and so the cycle continues.

The librarian at the CSSD, although willing to participate in the formation of a group, believed that only the rich and well established collections would be able to contribute. The poorer collections would have neither the time nor the staff to send representatives to attend meetings. The LA, she felt, was not the poorer body to do the work of a TLA if it did exist though she did emphasise that her views were purely personal and tentative, based on what she believed to be a fairly superficial knowledge of the field of theatre librarianship. There are many people working in collections who are not qualified librarians and have very little to do with librarianship. They regard themselves as "theatre people" rather than "library people" which indeed many of them are. A group connected with the LA might alienate them, and many small inadequately funded collections would not be represented. If this is the case, and from what I have seen, there is much truth in this statement, then a group similar to ARLIS would be more suitable.

It is worth comparing the situation of art libraries some years ago with the present state of theatre libraries. There have always been far more art libraries than theatre libraries but the same need arose for communication and co-operation between librarians. Only within the last twenty years have art librarians attempted to supply this need. Interest has grown steadily in the visual arts. A recent article in the Library Association Record [54] reports: "In Britain art history has at least been accepted as a respectable academic discipline, and universities, polytechnics and colleges have developed important collections of literature and visual material . . . A number of public library authorities have taken a special interest in the visual arts: some have set up separate

art libraries manned by specialist staff or have developed . . . support programmes for schools and extramural work".

Fawcett noted something which theatre librarians ought to consider:

" . . . at the level of informal (not fully structured or financed) co-operation and voluntary association, the situation has been transformed during the past ten years or so through the formation of societies of art libraries/librarians . . . All these societies have roughly similar aims. They are concerned to promote the exchange of information and ideas, to raise professional standards, to help achieve better national provision of materials and services, to serve as a focus for concerted action, and to express the distinctive character of art librarianship".

The similarity between art librarianship and theatre librarianship is too close to avoid drawing comparisons and recommending that theatre librarians should take a leaf out of the art librarians' book.

I did write to the LA to check whether anyone had suggested a group to represent theatre librarians and received a reply which commented on the paucity of material on theatre librarianship in their information files. The idea of a theatre library group had, as I expected, never previously been broached by any member of the LA:

"To what extent this silence indicates a lack of concern or interest in the formation of such a group, however, is obviously a moot point. Certainly until it is actively 'lobbied' by a number of its members on the topic it is difficult to see how the Association can consider the recognition of such a group as being of immediate concern". [55]

The Association was willing to consider, if the need arose and members came forward, the formation of such a group. It is therefore, most definitely the responsibility of those who work in theatre collections to decide if any benefits could be derived from a theatre library association and to take the necessary steps to create one.

The American TLA seemed to believe that "the closest organisation in spirit to the TLA in England" [56] is the Society for Theatre Research but this is not really correct. Its membership does not include many librarians and it is not a society which exists primarily to serve their interests. It is concerned mainly with

theatre research,not with the more practical, curatorial problems of the theatre collection.

9.22 The Theatre Library Association: New York

In 1936, Gilder mentioned in her introduction to Theatre Collections [57] that a number of European countries were forming associations "to promote the collection and care of theatre records". These were helping to build up enthusiasm "reflected in the steady increase in size and effectiveness of the libraries and museums everywhere". The following year the TLA, affiliated to the ALA, was founded at the suggestion of the late George Freedley, later Curator of the Theatre Collection, New York Public Library. The organisation continues to thrive:

"to further the interests of gathering, preserving and making available through libraries, museums and private collections any resources of the theatre in all its forms". [58]

In a critical article about theatre libraries Laraine Correll [59] wrote in 1972:

"The Theatre Library Association has been endeavouring for a number of years to produce standards for theatre librarians and a manual of theatre librarianship. In the effort to provide guidelines and leadership, theatre librarians are severely hampered by the absence of critical studies of themselves and their collections".

The same is true in England, except for my humble contribution. Membership of the TLA is international, but naturally the majority of its meetings are held in and around New York which is obviously of little use to British members. Since 1940, the TLA has published a newsletter three times a year called Broadside. An annual publication has appeared for some years, primarily as Theatre Annual, later as Theatre Documentation and now as Performing Arts Resources, the first volume of which appeared in 1974. This annual attempts to assist in the documentation of theatre resources and includes articles on:

"storage and use of non-print resources, studies of censorship, indexes, bibliographies, subject matter guides to various archives and collections, analyses of individual collections and museums, descriptions of regional holdings in a particular field or subject matter, and thorough surveys of research materials, government holdings, training and programs in the performing arts. While the major portion of each annual volume . . . will be devoted to describing and indexing resources for research, some articles will

treat such issues as historiography, methodology, and states of research in the performing arts".[60]

It is obvious that the professionalism and efficient organisation of theatre information services in the States is due to the recognition of the importance of theatre libraries and collections by those using and working in them. Their importance has not yet been generally acknowledged in this country.

9.23 Conferences

As well as organisations which exist for those working in theatre collections, there are also conferences held which attempt to bring together those having a common interest in information provision in theatre and drama.

In the 1950's, it became obvious that as so much material was accumulating on the theatre, it needed expert handling and documenting by curators and librarians. It was important that those professionally involved in the theatre should make contact with these people. IFLA was the body to whom it was suggested that a group should be formed to represent those who document and preserve theatrical material. In 1954, Council accepted the foundation of the International Section of Theatre Collections and and Libraries, later called the International Section of Libraries and Museums of the Performing Arts, or SIBMAS, accepting the tendency of the Americans to call their collections by the term 'Performing Arts' rather than 'Theatre'.

Conferences are held approximately every two years, at various places such as Budapest and Vienna with the 1978 conference being planned for Barcelona and then possibly Belgrade in Yugoslavia. The UK have not yet acted as host. The most recent Congress held in Vienna, September 1976 was reported in Broadside.[61] It is interesting to note that what was being discussed were the perennial problems repeatedly referred to in this survey. These were:

1) Lack of money. Most of the libraries and museums represented at the conference were being state supported (unlike in the UK) and budgets were being cut.
2) The difficulties of "preserving faithfully all the production records of current theatrical production".
3) A general awareness of the difficulties everyone faces in "documenting the disperate and ephemeral elements of theatre history". M.C. Henderson reporting the conference in Broadside

expressed the need for a "more effective interchange of ideas concerning our individual methods".

I noticed there was no UK representative at the conferences. Alex Schouvaloff of the Theatre Museum mentioned, in communication, an annual conference of theatre museums which appears to keep its activities secret, as I have traced no record of its proceedings or even of its venue.

It is exciting to see so much co-operation on an international scale with exchange of ideas and problems, where librarians and curators are collaborating not only with each other but also with the creative artists in the theatre world, maintaining contact with the living theatre. It is equally dispiriting to see the lack of involvement from British theatre librarians though I think some progress is now being made. On December 3rd 1977, a Conference on Specialist Book Collections was held at the Central School of Speech and Drama where some of the points raised in this study were beginning to be discussed. A wide cross-section of people attended including many librarians involved with theatre and drama collections and other representative of publishing and the arts. The Conference was due to reconvene in the summer of 1978.

10. THE BRITISH THEATRE INSTITUTE: THE STORY SO FAR

10.1 Background

The BTI is probably the only major body in this country that has really been concerned with promoting more efficient information resources in the theatre by way of centralisation and co-ordination, and has drawn attention to the chaos which a researcher must face when attempting to track down particular theatrical records. It has also tried to draw up policies which theatre libraries should observe in collecting and disseminating information.

The background to the formation of the BTI, which finally came into existence, 8th September 1975, (known as the Commission for a BTI up to that point) is worth studying for it illustrates the aims which the BTI have been struggling to put into operation and the total lack of government support for its schemes. The situation remains today much the same as in 1971 when talks first began about the formation of a BTI.

In 1971, an article was published in Theatre Quarterly [62] called: "The Case For a British Theatre Institute", citing the difficulties faced by researchers in drawing together material on the theatre. Notably, Diana Howard had been hampered in her research into London theatres and music halls: "by fragmentation of collections, by fragmentation within collections, by lack of co-operation from some private collections - and by the fact that almost all were inadequately catalogued or indexed".

The article expressed the anxiety, voiced also by Kahn in 1955, that although libraries and organisations were preserving the theatre's past, contemporary theatrical material was being neglected. The efficiency of record keeping depends very much on whether the theatre concerned has kept the appropriate documentation and recognises its value to future generations of actors, producers and researchers. Some theatre collections are doing their duty however. Howard [63] mentions how the Enthoven Collection: "has become, through the co-operation of theatre managers, virtually a'copyright' collection of contemporary programmes and other records relating to current productions".

The Collection attempts also to obtain copies of material from other collections. Howard suggests that it should be given funds to permit it to obtain copies of documents in the Public Records Office or the State Paper Room of the British Museum.

The Theatre Quarterly goes on to suggest that all collections should have a policy of collecting lighting designs, light and

sound plots, directors' notes, rehearsal schedules, the set and costume designs, the programmes, photographs and newspaper reviews connected with each production. If a formal policy of conservation was initiated by theatre collections and publicised, many theatres would be only too willing to donate their records rather than having to decide what to do with them and leaving them to accumulate in their own institutions.

Thus was born the idea of a BTI, analogous to the British Film Institute, which would be given finance to consolidate theatre archives, to conserve existing records and would attempt to reconcile "mutually exclusive - even antagonistic organisations" [64] of which there are many in this field. The BTI would employ staff to collect, collate and index material. TQ also suggested a policy of centralisation of archives but this obviously would not be favourably received by some collections, especially in the provinces, which would want to retain their records for the benefit of local researchers. A way to overcome this would be the formation of union catalogues, suggested earlier in the dissertation, which could prove a tremendous benefit to researchers and librarians. Obviously a standard system of classifying and cataloguing material would help any plans for a central body.

In 1971, a symposium was held to discuss the ideas published in TQ, where a working party was elected to campaign for a British Theatre Institute and a Research Centre. It is interesting to note what a wide range of representatives attended this meeting: ". . . practitioners, administrators, technicians, critics, academics, students, educationists, delegates from museums, regional theatres, commercial concerns, as well as the Arts Council, the British Council and Equity . . . . responding to a situation bordering near enough chaos to be the subject of scandal and concern . . . . . ".[65]

They all agreed that action must be taken "now". That was in 1971, and only haltingly have plans developed and few of the original objectives have been achieved. Other suggestions were put forward by the symposium such as a plan for a centre for the British theatre which would serve the function of a central reference catalogue and library and could exploit the commercial link between theatre and tourism in London by providing an information disseminating centre for the theatre in London and the provinces.

All these splendid ideas fell flat since no-one was prepared to finance such a concern. This is disturbing as all other European countries have the equivalent of a theatre institute. BTI has little power since it is a "registered charity and company limited by guarantee".[66] If we look abroad, we notice that Sweden has an institute covering theatre, film and television which acts as a training and research institute; East and West Berlin have large scale Academies of the Arts. The East Berlin Academy has been responsible for the resurgence of production and popularity of the neglected playwright Oden Van Horvath (witnessed in London in the National Theatre production of Tales from the Vienna Woods). This Academy has also translated into German foreign language periodicals thus making them available to German students and theatre practitioners. In this country, film is represented by the British Film Institute, which collects archives, holds performances and educational functions and has its own library. This was formed in 1933 receiving in 1970 a government grant totalling £500,000. In the fight for a BTI, librarians have played hardly any part. In the list of people present at the Symposium listed in TQ,[67] there appears to have been no official representative from the Library Association and few if any librarians (though the keeper of the Bristol Theatre Collection was present). If any were present, they did not acknowledge their profession. Despite the fact that many of the matters being discussed were of concern to librarians, those present consisted mainly of actors, producers, directors, teachers of and lecturers in drama or English. Two librarians I met on the course of my research are now closely involved with the BTI.

10.2 The work of the BTI today

"The aim of (the BTI) Council is to press for the creating and proper funding of a professional institute for the theatre, in the sense that architecture has the RIBA and the cinema the British Film Institute".[66]

Despite a letter to the D.E.S. sent by the Working Party for a British Theatre Institute and Research Centre (later termed the Commission), March 28 1972, stating that:

"It is a matter of concern that Britain is the only European country without a Theatre Institute today", the BTI is still run by voluntary help and is dependent on donations and subscriptions. It received £2,500 from the Arts Council for 1977 but no money is

forthcoming for 1978. Funds from subscriptions barely cover the cost of producing the BTI newsletter and postage to all members. This has therefore to be subsidised by the grant from the Arts Council. The rest of the grant goes towards the BTI publications, which are ambitious and of great value to theatre researchers and librarians.

The BTI now plans to produce career information for young people, study guides on particular topics in the theatre and guides to museum collections. There is some discussion about an experimental production of a British Drama Index, on the same lines as British Humanities Index, which would serve the needs of actors, producers and theatre managers needing immediate information from every source about reviews of a particular play. This would entail a weekly issue, though this would be costly and possibly not practical. Academics would make more use of a cumulated volume. The index would list scholarly abstracts from theatre and architecture periodicals, where architecture touched on the field of theatre. Another scheme needing support is a subject index to theatre periodicals, one of Diana Howard's ideas. This scheme would need to be costed before any financing, possibly from the BLRDD, and requires a six month pilot run but at the moment no-one has the time available to carry it out.

The idea of a central organisation has fallen through due to lack of funds. A member of the BTI informed me that a new council is being elected and it is hoped that this new body will have fresh impetus to push for government aid. Naturally, there has been considerable disillusionment as the BTI has suffered constant rebuffs and lack of government interest.

A member of the Drama Panel of the Arts Council believed that the reason for the BTI's financial problem stemmed from the fact that the Council tended to support theatres and actors rather than libraries during this time of economic hardship. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the D.E.S. will not give money directly to the BTI, despite the fact that it is responsible for the Arts. Every problem connected with the theatre is channelled to the Arts Council. Since the Arts Council has not the authority of a Ministry, it is powerless. As a consequence, there is no proper government representation for the Arts, unlike abroad where most countries possess some kind of ministry of culture or the arts.

The most recent development in this saga is that the Arts Council

has set up a feasibility study into the formation of a new British Theatre Centre. According to the Information Officer of the Arts Council, in communication:

"The purpose of such a centre would be to bring together in a federation many theatre organisations as well as providing administration services for the theatre profession".

Whether the BTI would be swallowed up by this body is not clear. Certainly the BTI have said they are prepared to be disbanded should it mean that some government funded institution would take its place, and achieve the aims for which it has been striving all these years.

It is essential, however, that librarians should make their presence felt more within the BTI and other areas of research into theatre resources. Just as the Citizens Advice Bureaux provided the type of information needed by the public which the libraries had failed to supply, so others will enter the theatre information field and organise it themselves, without the library profession realising what has happened. Is it perhaps a fear of "fools rushing in where angels fear to tread"? For the profession's sake, I hope not.

11. THE THEATRE MUSEUM: "A STAGE SHOWCASE"?

Despite the failure of the BTI to achieve its aim of a central information and research centre for the theatre, a very similar development has occurred in the shape of the Theatre Museum, one of the most exciting innovations in the field of theatre research since the study of theatre became a respectable discipline. The TM officially merges the collections of the British Theatre Museum and Library, with the Gabrielle Enthoven and Harry Beard collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The physical merger should take place in the 1980's, at the Old Flower Market of Covent Garden which has 42,000 square feet of space available. The original plan had been to take over seven rooms in Somerset House overlooking the Strand but the government placed too many restrictions on the building, ordering that the lavish interior decoration and structure of the rooms should not be obscured in any way. Since a museum must be free to black out sections, use special lighting effects and block out daylight to show exhibits to the best advantage, the Somerset House plan was abandoned. Covent Garden should prove ideal since its rooms are quite bare and adaptable, although the choice of site was criticised by Tom Sutcliffe in The Guardian [68] who argued that the restricted space at the Flower Market would cause problems of heating, lighting, ventilation and conservation. Schouvaloff dismisses these criticisms as quite unfounded. It is to be hoped that his optimism is soundly based. Sutcliffe had also suggested that the Flower Market should be:

"a centre point of information about theatre archives and collections not just its own . . . This means doing research for other people continually".

This is exactly what the BTI had in mind, who for a long time had planned to establish themselves alongside the TM but were finally crushed by lack of funds and government support. Sutcliffe's suggestion is an excellent one but when I asked Mr. Schouvaloff what he thought of the idea he replied with the typical realism of one involved in a great venture:

". . . at present, I don't have enough staff to deal with even our own collection".

However, he too had envisaged the BTI setting up alongside the museum and had given his wholehearted approval to the BTI's plans for a central information centre, including a library, museum and

research centre. Unfortunately, it was not to be.
Sutcliffe had also criticised the fact that the Flower Market would be unable to accommodate the library of the V and A, but this too was refuted by Schouvaloff. There are definite plans to have a library at the site including, hopefully, material from the BTM library and the bookcases in the V and A. When I asked if qualified librarians would be appointed to run the library I was informed, somewhat vaguely:
"Yes, but later"!
It will be interesting to see what provisions are made for a library service for up to now the libraries of the Theatre Museum have certainly been relegated to second or even third place.
It has taken approximately twenty-two years to get this far, since the idea of a British Theatre Museum was conceived in 1955 when Laurence Irving (grandson and biographer of Sir Henry Irving) wrote a letter to The Times in which he complained that:
"none of the exi ting public or private collections of theatrical material was sufficiently comprehensive or coherent for the purposes of research". 69
A meeting was convened by the STR, sponsored by the Arts Council and attended by representatives of the theatre, museum, universities and private collectors. Out of the discussion arose the concern that Britain was virtually the "odd man out" in Europe, in that she did not possess a theatre museum, subsidised by the State, and that a lot of British theatrical material was becoming dispersed among collectors overseas. As a result the BTMA was formed as a kind of stepping stone.
"until such time as the government of the day could be convinced of the good reasons for following the example of less wealthy countries in establishing a National Theatre Museum". 69
That day has at last arrived and certainly it is a great triumph for theatre researchers and curators alike. Perhaps theatre librarians will take heart from seeing government support for such an institution and hope that as a consequence their libraries will be recognised as valuable institutions, worthy of financial protection.
The TM will include all performing arts and will not be restricted to British material - a decision which has received criticism from certain areas because it is felt that such an institution should represent national assets only, as was the original plan.
The museum will need to expand almost as soon as it settles into

Covent Garden, and fortunately Schouvaloff believes that expansion will be possible on the same site. The wealth of material that exists in Britain on the theatre is almost inconceivable. In 1963 an article appeared in Theatre Notebook [70] stressing the need for vast areas of space to house such material:

"When one thinks of the potential supply of 'objets de theatre' - in costume, prop, machinery, art, statuary, music and ballet - all of which is ultimately important and revealing, one envisions needs for an establishment the size at least of the Albert Hall in which to house it".

That was seventeen years ago, and material is accumulating twice as rapidly now.

On the whole, support for the TM seems to be enthusiastic and optimistic, and so it should be after all this time. It should provide a first class tourist attraction with its central position in London, the "heart of theatre-land", at the same time bringing life back to a neglected and forgotten area of London, Covent Garden. It will bring together valuable research resources, hitherto scattered. Finally, it is living proof of government involvement and support. Perhaps the government can be persuaded to give just a little more to those hungrily waiting in the wings: the libraries and the British Theatre Institute.

CONCLUSIONS

I have attempted to illustrate the appalling lack of financial support for and inadequate methods of organisation of theatre libraries and collections. At the same time it is obvious that these libraries and collections have much to offer in terms of valuable stock and research resources. We owe it to the theatre and students of the theatre to ensure more adequate means of disseminating information.

I hope that this survey points to areas of possible further research as I have been able only to skim the surface of such problems as classification and cataloguing. These deserve the attention of a full-time research programme, which hopefully, in the not too distant future, will be provided.

However, it could take many years for theatre libraries to be recognised as worthy of support and interest as other special libraries. By that time, it could be too late. Many libraries could quite easily be broken up and dispersed throughout the country and abroad. The problems faced by the BTA library have alarmed many theatre researchers: it could just be the taste of things to come. Let us hope that will not be what the future holds. We could certainly do worse than attempt to follow in the steps of the Americans and equal their achievement in theatre librarianship.

APPENDIX I

Staff Structure

Library	No. of Staff	Paid	Vol.	Pt. time	Qual.	Unqual.
Bristol Theatre Collection	2	2		1		2
BBC: Play Library.	6	6				6
Drama Section, Reference Library	2	2			1	1
British Council Drama Library	1	1				1
British Theatre Association	5	5		2	2	3
British Theatre Museum Library	1		1	1	1	
Central Reference Library Westminster	2	2				2
Central School of Speech & Drama	2	2			1	1
Royal Academy of Dramatic Art	1	1		1	1	
Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection	2	2			1	1

Abbreviations

Vol. = Voluntary

Qual. = Qualified

Unqual. = Unqualified

APPENDIX II

Courses in theatre librarianship

a) College of Librarianship Wales, Aberystwyth. Department of Bibliographical Studies runs a course on special subject of drama. Two courses offered:

i) Batchelor of Librarianship

Course structure:

Bibliographical control

a. General

b. Specific

c. Information systems within the field

Indexes

a. Characters/Plays

b. Periodicals

Periodicals

a. General

b. Specialised

Assessed project on Reference Sources

Encyclopaedia

Dictionaries

Bibliographical sources

Directories

Illustrative material

Play editions

Collections

Citations

Assessed project: Bibliography

Compile a selective annotated bibliography on a subject of your own choice, covering the range of bibliographical apparatus.

Sample exercise for subject bibliography - drama

a. Examine the entry for theatre, together with associated references in the following encyclopaedias:
Britannica, Chambers, Americana, et cetera.

b. Assess the particular contributions made by the following works:
Encyclopaedia of World Drama, Oxford Companion to the Theatre, Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre, et cetera.

ii) Postgraduate Diploma

Course structure:

Bibliographical control

a. General

b. Specific

c. Institutions concerned with bibliographical control of the literature of Theatre and Allied Arts.

Indexes

a. Characters

b. Play

c. Periodicals

Periodicals and Serials

a. General

b. Specialised

Other areas covered:

Reference sources, play editions, specialist collections, classifications, problems in theatre arts.

Literature Search

Purpose

a. To facilitate an understanding of the techniques involved in the compilation of a bibliography.

b. To examine the concept of bibliographical control as exemplified in one particular subject area.

Assessed Project: Periodicals

Examine the structure of periodical publishing within the field of the theatre. Illustrate each area by elucidating major English language periodicals, current and retrospective.

b) Florida State University 1976-1977 [11]

The course was planned to train people for work in theatre collections in support of theatre study and research. It was to be taught by researchers in modern library and archival "methodologies", and specialists in the management of the unique requirements of a theatre collection.

The aims of the course were to produce students able to:

"1) Administer and organise a modern theatre library or archive so as to utilise efficiently the resources of staff, material and space. This will also include such special skills as collection development and conservation, fund raising and grant proposal preparation;

2) Plan and implement bibliographic and information services related to the arts for scholars, artists, students and the general public.

3) Participate in international documentation of theatre research resources and in the exchange of bibliographic and research-related information".

The course was also offering sessions on cataloguing and classification of theatre material, special problems and trends in theatre librarianship, and the application of general principles of library organisation to theatre libraries and collections.

The course was to last a year and not be repeated for some years, except for occasional seminars and workshops for those already trained.

APPENDIX III Classification of schemes in use

Library	Scheme in use	Comments by librarian/curator
Bristol Theatre Collection	Bliss: Bibliographic Classification (1953) with Sandbourne-Cutter tables	Successful. Bliss quite detailed on theatre and drama
BBC:Play Library. Drama Section, Reference Library	Alphabetical arrangement only. Dewey: Decimal Classification (17th ed.)	Awkward. Dewey splits the literature i.e. drama from theatre
British Council Drama Library	No scheme in use	Not used by outsiders, so library 'skills' not demanded.
British Theatre Association	Complete re-use of Dewey's numbering system as in The Players' Library eg. 000 - General Works 100 - Dramatic Theory 200 - The Theatre	No comment
British Theatre Museum Library	Library of Congress Scheme (1915)	Possible to use a dated scheme, as few newly published books added to stock
Central Reference Library Westminster	Dewey: Decimal Classification (12th ed.)	Causes problems, as outdated and useless for drama and theatre. This ed. much adapted by Lionel McColvin, former librarian, and his adaptations are used.
Central School of Speech and Drama	Dewey: Decimal Classification (17th ed.)	Much adapted. Used because it was felt students would be familiar with Dewey.
Royal Academy of Dramatic Art	Rough classification just started, based on national drama, and within that, chronological periods	Little time available for classifying
Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection	Dewey: Decimal Classification (18th ed.) Used to use 17th ed.	Books about drama are classified by Dewey. Playtexts are divided by general country classification. The scheme is "well amended".

APPENDIX IV

Range of services provided by libraries and collections

a) Stock: Subject coverage

Subject coverage is directly linked with the type of library and for whom it was created. The libraries which existed for those who were intending to enter the acting profession, belonging to schools of drama or linked with a university drama department, tended to provide for the education of the student beyond the field of drama and theatre. The CSSD library had a positive reason for this since the school offers a variety of courses: a basic Acting and Stage Management course, a course training teachers of English in Speech and Drama, and a course in Speech Therapy. The library's stock of 12,000 books naturally reflected this variety and it seemed an ideal combination of subjects as each of the courses could benefit from examining the book provision for the other courses. A lot of material on speech therapy, psychology and medically related subjects was obviously highly specialised but the following subject provision could be usefully drawn on by both intending actors and teachers: History and Criticism of the Theatre, Pantomime, Circus, Puppetry, English Literature with a large poetry section, Literary Criticism, Letters and Diaries, Art, Music, Film, Education, Social Sciences, Art and Technique of Speech, Language and Linguistics, Religion and Mythology, Children's Literature, History, Novels and Short Stories, and Comparative Theatre. There was, apparently, a heavy demand for Shakespeare criticism, theatre history, theatrical biography, and stage design from the drama students. Those on the technical stage course required much material on the social and historical background of a period in dramatic history to aid their designs of stage sets.

The RADA library also ranged much beyond the normal confines of a drama/theatre collection and similarly with the Bristol Theatre Collection. RADA also wanted to extend beyond theatre as a performing art to include ballet, circus, puppetry, film and television, but at the moment is constrained by finance.

Other libraries such as the British Council, BBC and British Theatre Association were deliberately serving a need from their members for immediate information about the theatre. The BTA and BTM libraries were also concerned with assisting those carrying out detailed research, such as writers or theatre historians. The BTM library carried a wide range of comparative

theatre, including books on the theatre in Ireland, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Russia, Turkey, China, Japan, France, Germany and Holland. The BTA holds a large collection of British and foreign theatre journals, and foreign plays. They also have a valuable collection of nineteenth century plays and melodramas presented by Harley Granville-Barker. Their bookstock covers theatre law, copyright, censorship, theatre organisation, production including decoration, scenery, lighting, costume, speech and gesture, so there is considerable emphasis on the practice of theatre.

All the libraries carried a varying amount of playscripts, some more than others depending on their main function as a library. Wakefield has 5,000 sets of plays being the headquarters of the Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection. It also has a full scale library service on drama and the theatre comprising altogether some 54,000 items. There is a lot of emphasis placed on the technique of acting in the library's stock, since the service is used a lot by schools and teaching staff. The range of playsets is particularly impressive, covering material in English, German, Scandinavian, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian.

Bristol possesses the Beerbohm Tree Collection, a unique record (because it is complete) of an actor-manager's business and professional dealings at the end of the nineteenth century. Also of importance are the Robinson Bequest of eighteenth and nineteenth century West Country Playbills, the Landstone Bequest of a complete set of London theatre programmes for professional productions between 1944 and 1969, loan collection material on Lillah McCarthy and Harley Granville-Barker, and the Bristol Old Vic Archives. Audio-visual material is held including tape recorded on cassette tapes. Also held at Bristol are the original designs for the RSC Roman Season, 1972.

The Central Reference Library, Westminster has an impressive collection, including the Pavlova Memorial Library and the Richardson collection which comprises microfilmed material on dance. It was once the London Special Collection for the Performing Arts, but rather illogically, Kent now has special responsibility for 790-792, since January 1976. However, Westminster will continue to maintain its collection which is reference only. There is lending material, notably theatrical biography, at Charing Cross Road Lending Library, close to the

Reference Library.

b) Notes on the Aims of the Collections and who can use them

Bristol Theatre Collection:

Has been established for over twenty-five years since the formation of the University Drama Department, 1951, Rockefeller Foundation made substantial award to University to encourage further development in field of theatre, including a collection of graphic material illustrating the history of the theatre. Anyone with serious interest in the theatre entitled to use the collection. Will start to gear itself more to the needs of the Friends of the Theatre Collection.

British Broadcasting Corporation

Play Library:

Aims to collect all the drama department productions, including plays, 'features' (eg. documentaries), poetry programmes and readings. Keeps an 'as broadcast' script of every programme in this field which is never allowed outside the Corporation. For use by those working in BBC, though occasionally deals with external phone/postal queries. Also keeps plays bought by BBC but not yet transmitted. These are supplied to producer when scheduled for transmission. Maintains records on all plays submitted to the BBC, so can check on its history of either acceptance or rejection.

Drama Section (Reference Library):

Exists primarily for BBC staff, or those engaged on BBC work, such as outside contributors preparing material. Used heavily by the television library, drama producers (radio and television), world service, programmes such as Omnibus, Kaleidoscope. Basically providing a rapid information service, though some queries are pursued to a greater depth.

British Council Drama Library: (Services now curtailed and encompassed by the work of the Drama Department)

Serves those working for the BC, here and abroad, and exists to supply BC libraries with information about contemporary British drama. Students and other visitors occasionally allowed to consult the Collection. Service also provided to qualified borrowers recommended by representatives of the BC abroad, and to members of the BC Drama Advisory Committee, producers, managers, artists connected with the BC drama tours.

British Theatre Association Library:

Provides library service for members only. Founded in 1919 to

"assist the development of the art of the theatre and to promote a right relation between drama and the life of the community". (Geoffrey Whitworth, founder). Aims to supply works of reference and text books useful to producers (professional and amateur), actors, students of dramatic history and other researchers.

British Theatre Museum Library:

Comprises the library of the BTM and the STR, though now legally belongs to TM. Originally confined to members of STR but now all serious enquirers - students, professionals, the general public - permitted to consult the librarian and the stock.

Central Reference Library, Westminster:

Available to everyone. Used to be the London Special Collection for the Performing Arts. Lending material also available at Charing Cross Road Lending Library. Specialises in film and theatre. In the centre of "theatre/film land".

Central School of Speech and Drama Library:

School founded by Elsie Fogerty, 1906, joining Sir Frank Benson, to devise a new form of training in speech and drama for young actors and other students. She was especially concerned with the quality of speaking in actors. Became interested in speech pathology. The School is linked with the Sydney Webb School of Education (Polytechnic of Central London) for teacher training purposes. Library specifically for the use of students engaged in speech and drama courses at the school. Receives occasional outside queries. Library opened 1972.

Greenwood Library, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art:

For use of students and staff of RADA, though it receives postal/phone queries from, for example, stage-managers and producers and external serious researchers are allowed to use the library. Opened in 1968. Attempts now to back up what the students are taught with appropriate literature to enable them to examine background of a play, an acting method, or dramatic and literary movement.

Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection, Wakefield:

This is an individual library in its own right, not 'tacked on' to the other public library services. The Joint Scheme aims to "supplement the provision of . . . play sets available locally". Available to "educational institutions, cultural and other voluntary organisations and individual users residing in authorities in North, West and South Yorkshire". Enables local amateur groups

to borrow sets of plays for purpose of performance. Helps students of drama (notably from Bretton Hall College, near Wakefield) to supplement their own library facilities. Local schools make heavy use of the collection, especially with introduction of CSE drama projects. Staff use Collection for teaching ideas. Rarely used by professionals.
(The services of the museums visited are available to all since they are public institutions).

c) Notes on Special services and facilities offered by the libraries and collections:

Bristol Theatre Collection:
Reference collection only. Valuable collection of models of theatres, stage-sets and designs can be loaned to organisations for exhibitions, providing full insurance is taken out, and organisation if responsible for transport. Headphones available to listen to taped material. Slides also available but no viewing facilities on the premises. Prints and drawings are not for loan but possible to have photographs made through the Arts Faculty photographer at a charge. Plenty of reading space available around the perimeter of the room.

British Broadcasting Corporation:
Play Library:
Increasingly the library extends its service to the public who may be interested in tracing a particular play heard on the radio. Serious researchers in radio drama, especially from abroad, are sometimes admitted to the library, though the problem is accommodating them so they can sit and study the scripts. Often representatives from broadcasting stations all over the world, and an increasing number of University students and professors may consult the archives. Scripts are supplied to foreign broadcasting stations (approximately 200 per month). Small organisations may want plays selected for them which may involve weighing up the politics and religion of the country concerned before making a choice.

Drama Section (Reference Library):
Not all reference stock. About 200-300 loans made per month. Information service offered. Provides photographs, prints, illustrations for use in a particular programme, or in the Publication Department. Public queries are forwarded from the Programme Correspondence Section. Library has compiled a list of radio and television plays which have been published and are

therefore available to the public. Unpublished scripts cannot be made available. Visiting students and researchers from here and abroad are allowed to make use of the library, provided they have tried other sources first and have a letter of introduction. A graded charge is made.

British Council Drama Library: (Most of the services either no longer exist or have been taken over by the Playreading Lending Library at BC).

Operates a Published Play Scheme supplying BC libraries abroad with drama texts. Reference service provided to members of the BC, covering biography, costume, stage design and architecture, theatre history. Emphasis on current information about contemporary drama. Settles problems of copyright for centres abroad wishing to perform plays. Supplies information about festivals in Britain and abroad. Used to publish Play Bulletin, consisting of list of plays arranged by title, roughly in chronological order of performance, followed by a selection of reviews from the 'quality' newspapers, and giving date of review, name of reviewer, place of performance, date of first performance, list of cast, designers, direction. Useful for retrospective information about plays and sent to BC representatives abroad.

British Theatre Association Library:

Information and Advisory Service provided which "covers information on plays, their rights and royalties, artistic and technical aspects of play on production, history and criticism of the theatre and details on theatre personalities . . . the most comprehensive theatre information service to be found in this country". Lends sets of plays. Can hire up to three sets of plays at 50p for three weeks, and 40p for each subsequent week. For every £3 subscribed over and above the first subscription, one can borrow three extra books and hire one extra set. There is a deposit scheme in operation for unpublished fringe playscripts. Library has a useful set of musical scores. Publishes Drama, illustrated quarterly review, carrying articles by leading theatre writers, reviewing plays in London, regional and experimental theatre and also some of the leading plays presented by major companies overseas. Cyclostyled quarterly of new additions to stock also published. The Catalogue of Sets is updated by annual supplements in Drama. Reading room facilities.

British Theatre Museum Library:

Phone/postal queries answered as well as those by personal visit. Books all reference, except the Malcolm Morley Collection. Exceptions made occasionally for those professionally involved in theatre to borrow material. Senate House library assist in making up slides from books in the BTM library for exhibition and lecture purposes. They retain the slides after use, so they become part of the main library's collection.

Central School of Speech and Drama Library:

Stock mainly for loan. Photocopying machine available. Off-prints of important articles, especially for the 'education' courses maintained in files. Monthly list of new books circulated to the staff and available in the library. Talks given by librarian on library use at the beginning of each academic year. Reading room facilities both in the library, and separated from the library. Library Suggestions Book is provided.

Greenwood Library, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art:

Librarian has begun producing folders, centring on a particular play upon which students might be working, for example Molière's Tartuffe. Librarian will compile list of editions of Tartuffe held in the library, and books on Molière and his work. Also, xeroxes periodical articles containing reviews of productions of Tartuffe, recent and retrospective. A file is produced of suitable audition pieces for each student, begun as he enters the Academy, as students regularly demand advice on audition pieces. Four books available for a period of one term. No reading space available. Library suggestions book provided.

Yorkshire Libraries Joint Music and Drama Collection, Wakefield:

Catalogues of sets of plays being published for public's use and for the member libraries of the Scheme. Sets of plays consist of one copy for each character plus three extra copies for production purposes. Up to six sets may be borrowed. Period of loan may extend up to six months or longer by prior arrangement. Individuals outside the Scheme may borrow single copies of plays. Groups outside the Scheme may borrow sets provided reciprocal borrowing is permitted. Wakefield will undertake to buy any new set or single copy of a play to satisfy a request from the participating authorities.

Museums

Theatre Museum:

Enquiry service for researchers in the Student's Room. Material available also in the main library of the V and A, and in the Department of Prints and Drawings. Photocopying facilities. Photography permitted. Prints may be made from photographic negatives in the collection. New negatives made only in special circumstances. TM has also produced an impressive set of information cards, on sale at the bookshop, which focus on a particular person, period or aspect of the theatre. Each card is illustrated and has a list of suggested readings at the end of the text.

British Theatre Museum:

Museum now closed as part of the TM. When full-time curator was there, (1963-1974), it was possible for staff to delve into the huge collections of stored material to answer research queries, or to let the researcher examine an item. Publicity methods once far-reaching. Posters used to be sent to theatres, advertising the BTM's services. In the early days, H.A.J. Silley, lessee of the Saville Theatre publicised the BTMA's aims in his theatre programmes. The British Tourist Association voluntarily contacted the BTM, publicising anything of interest to tourists.

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